AWK!
COMICS

No. 1
$2.95

"UNCLE" MARK'S COMICS & STORIES

HELLO, boys and girls!! This is your old chum "Uncle" Mark, coming to you with this sampling of some of the earliest stories he ever produced! Some may argue that they probably should never see the light of day at all, but, hey, in looking over these old tales, I saw a spark that was still gleaming in them-- of the ideas that drove me to commit them to paper in the first place... so, what the 'ell, eh? Here they are in all their crude glory-- warts and all, as they say. I haven't cleaned them up at all, and they show (quite painfully, sometimes) all the glaring errors a novice will make in his first assaults on the medium. Most noticably, the lettering in these stories **really sucks**! But it's still readable, so I'm letting it stand. Also, technical errors abound-- logic is thrown out the window-- and unfettered ignorance runs rampant!! Almost as if they were little movies directed by William Shatner...

The first story, **OLIVER JARGON AND THE GRAVEYARD OF SPACE**, is the third story I wrote and drew featuring the outer space heroics of **O.J.**, who was kind of a space boy-scout in the year 2886,& certainly shows several distinct influences-- most noticably the duck stories of Carl Barks, and The Spirit, by Will Eisner. It's a long (28 page), epic little story, and a conscious attempt to make an old-fashioned Buck Rogers-like space adventure... and I still like the climax, splash panel and all!

SOLDIER BOY, the second story, is so riddled with story flaws that I almost didn't print it-- but the artwork, by fellow artist **Michael Vires**, is really good, and I think it stands up to a rereading. It's a case of effective, moody art saving a well-intentioned, but dumb story. It's no wonder I went right back to humorous tales!

So there you have it! The first (and perhaps last) issue of **Uncle Mark's Comics and Stories**-- I hope you enjoy it. And be sure to be on the lookout for Uncle Mark's regular comic book, **WALTER KITTY**, the funny animal comic with epic, Jules Verne-type leanings. Meow!

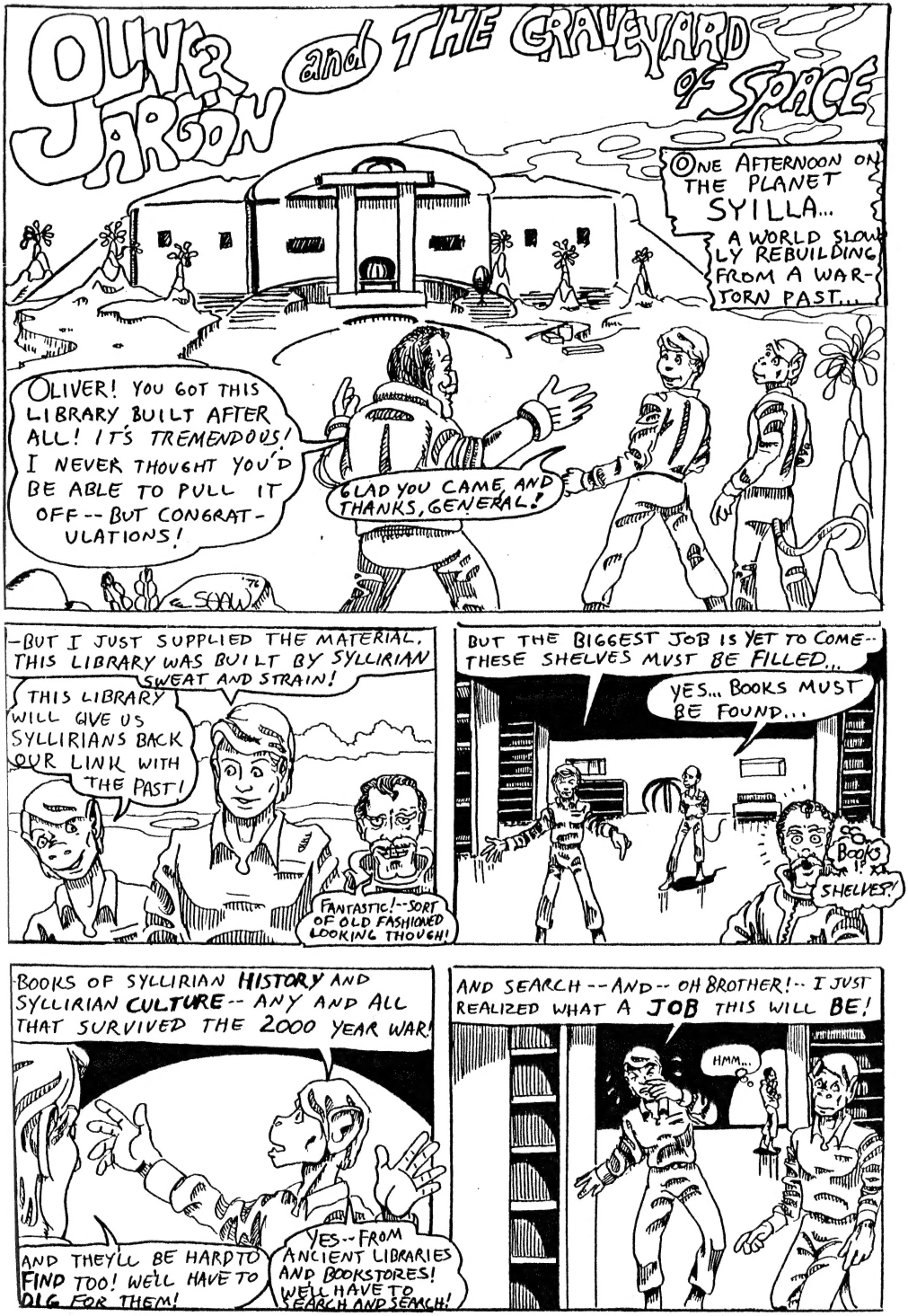
Meanwhile, Uncle Mark is heading back to his drawing board, the better to dream up more diabolical doodles to scare little children everywhere. Hmmm... Perhaps a dramatic story is in order-- perhaps... **SOLDIER BOY II...!**

Oh, forget it.

Your crazed pal,

"Uncle" Mark

UNCLE MARK'S COMICS AND STORIES, Vol 1, No. 1, November, 1992. Published by **AWK PROJECTS**, 2701 Penny Lane No. 219, Austin, Texas, 78757. Published whenever we can. Copyright © 1992, by Mark Shaw. All rights reserved. Price: $2.95 a copy. All the characters in this comic book and their distinct likenesses are the property of Mark Shaw, A.K.A. "Uncle" Mark. No similarity between any of the characters, names, institutions, or persons with those of any living or dead persons or institutions is intended. Any similarity which may exist is coincidental. All you of Earth are IDIOTS! Your STUPID minds--STUPID! STUPID!


OLIVER JARGON and THE GRAVEYARD of SPACE
ONE AFTERNOON ON THE PLANET SYILLA... A WORLD SLOWLY REBUILDING FROM A WAR-TORN PAST...
OLIVER! YOU GOT THIS LIBRARY BUILT AFTER ALL! IT'S TREMENDOUS! I NEVER THOUGHT YOU'D BE ABLE TO PULL IT OFF -- BUT CONGRATULATIONS!
GLAD YOU CAME AND THANKS, GENERAL!
SHAW '76
-BUT I JUST SUPPLIED THE MATERIAL. THIS LIBRARY WAS BUILT BY SYLLIRIAN SWEAT AND STRAIN!
THIS LIBRARY WILL GIVE US SYLLIRIANS BACK OUR LINK WITH THE PAST!
FANTASTIC! -- SORT OF OLD FASHIONED LOOKING THOUGH!
BUT THE BIGGEST JOB IS YET TO COME -- THESE SHELVES MUST BE FILLED...
YES... BOOKS MUST BE FOUND...
BOOKS!! SHELVES!
BOOKS OF SYLLIRIAN HISTORY AND SYLLIRIAN CULTURE -- ANY AND ALL THAT SURVIVED THE 2000 YEAR WAR!
AND THEY'LL BE HARD TO FIND TOO! WE'LL HAVE TO DIG FOR THEM!
YES -- FROM ANCIENT LIBRARIES AND BOOKSTORES! WE'LL HAVE TO SEARCH AND SEARCH!
AND SEARCH -- AND -- OH BROTHER! -- I JUST REALIZED WHAT A JOB THIS WILL BE!
HMM...

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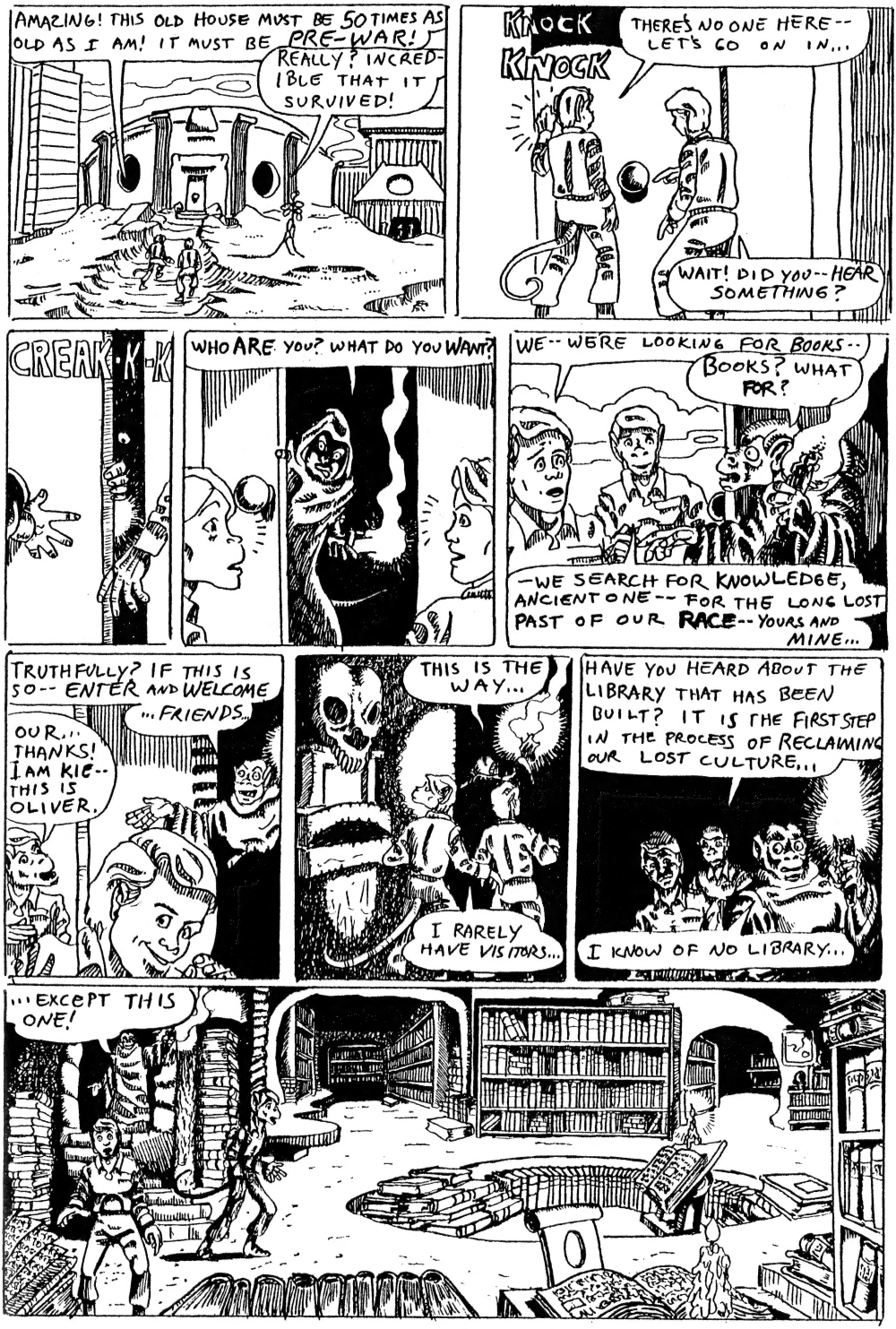
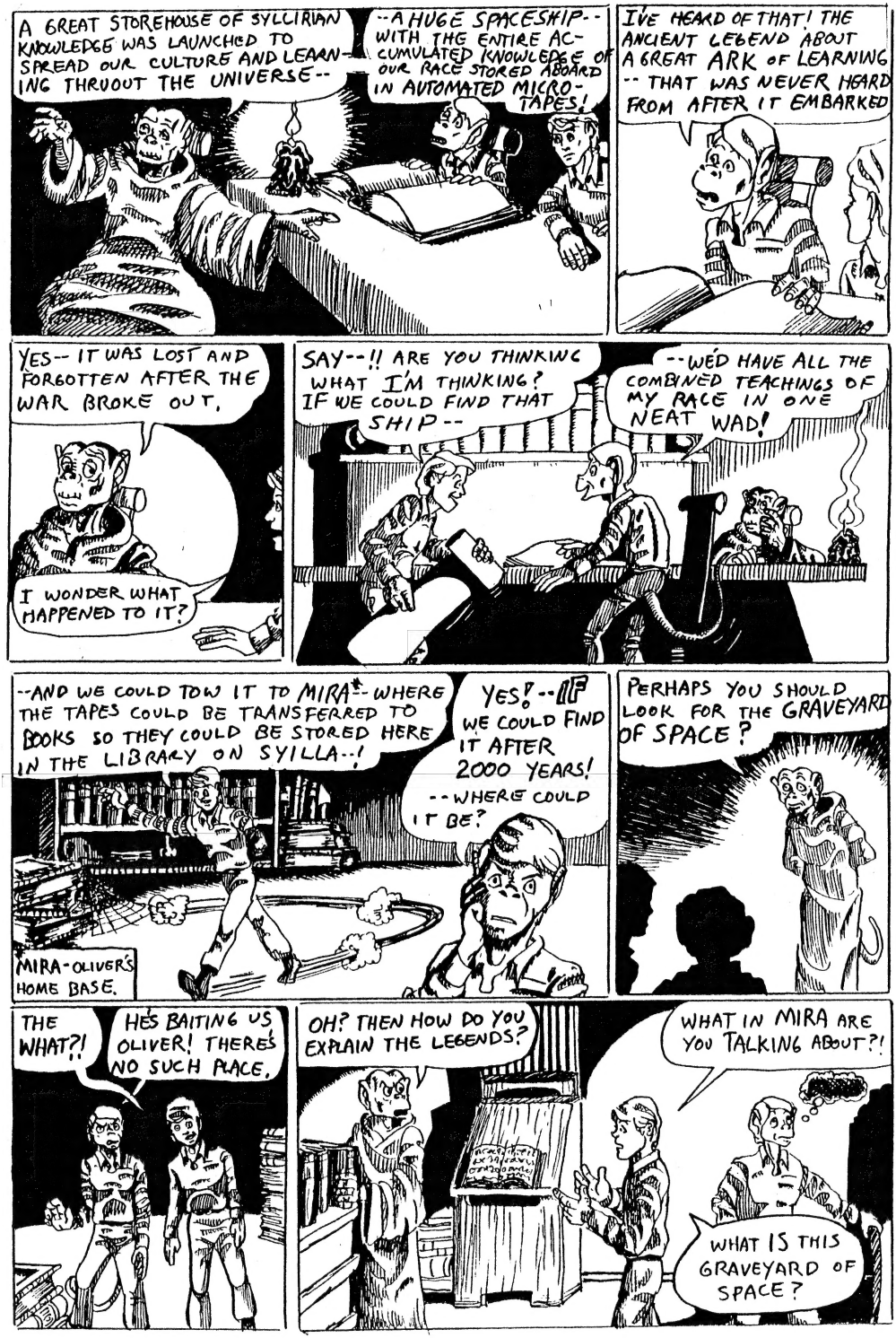
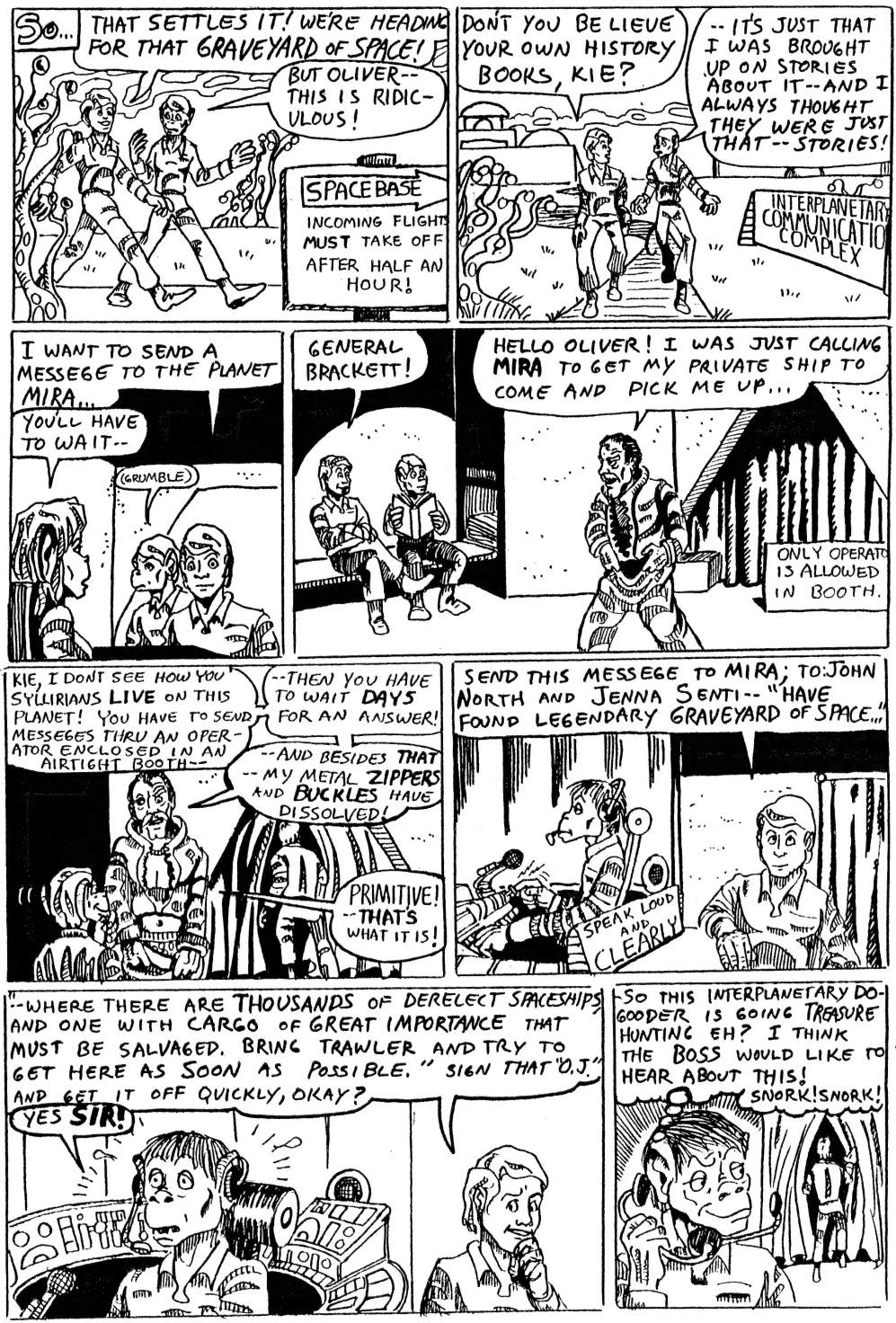
MY PEOPLE ARE TOO BUSY WITH THEIR OWN LIVES TO HELP US LOOK FOR BOOKS EITHER!
SO IT'S UP TO US!
OLIVER -- HOW COME YOU'RE LOOKING FOR BOOKS? HAVEN'T THE SYLLIRIANS EVER HEARD OF MICRO-TAPES?
SIGH...
MUCH MORE EFFECIENT YOU KNOW!
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN, GENERAL BRACKETT? MECHANICAL CONTRIVANCES NO LONGER FUNCTION ON SYILLA, SINCE THE WAR RAVAGED OUR WORLD, THE ATMOSPHERE PROMOTES METALLIC CORROSION...
THAT'S RIGHT! I DID FORGET...
WHAT'S THE MATTER? YOU LOOK SICK!
...I ALSO FORGOT THAT I RODE HERE FROM THE SPACE PORT IN A MODULE-JET!
CREAK
DD
DISSOLVE
I THOUGHT THAT SPACESHIP LEFT ME AND TOOK OFF AGAIN AWFUL FAST!
AND NOW I KNOW WHY EVERYONE STARED AT ME ON THE WAY OUT HERE -- THEY WERE WAITING FOR IT TO FALL APART!
LATER, IN THE NEARBY COMMUNITY OF HBRIT-ZANG...
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU WANT WITH BOOKS KIE... BUT I SEEM TO RECALL SEEING AN OLD MAN WHO SAID THERE WERE BOOKS IN THAT HOUSE UP THERE...
NOW THAT'S LUCK! MUCH THANKS EMIJ -- BY THE WAY... WHAT ARE YOU DOING NEXT...
--COME ON KIE! WE GOT WORK TO DO!


AMAZING! THIS OLD HOUSE MUST BE 50 TIMES AS OLD AS I AM! IT MUST BE PRE-WAR!
REALLY? INCREDIBLE THAT IT SURVIVED!
KNOCK KNOCK
THERE'S NO ONE HERE-- LET'S GO ON IN...
WAIT! DID YOU--HEAR SOMETHING?
CREAK-K-K
WHO ARE YOU? WHAT DO YOU WANT?
WE--WERE LOOKING FOR BOOKS--
BOOKS? WHAT FOR?
-WE SEARCH FOR KNOWLEDGE, ANCIENT ONE-- FOR THE LONG LOST PAST OF OUR RACE-- YOURS AND MINE...
TRUTHFULLY? IF THIS IS SO-- ENTER AND WELCOME ...FRIENDS.
OUR... THANKS! I AM KIE-- THIS IS OLIVER.
THIS IS THE WAY...
I RARELY HAVE VISITORS...
HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT THE LIBRARY THAT HAS BEEN BUILT? IT IS THE FIRST STEP IN THE PROCESS OF RECLAIMING OUR LOST CULTURE...
I KNOW OF NO LIBRARY...
...EXCEPT THIS ONE!

SO...
TOME UPON TOME--- VOLUME AFTER VOLUME...
...AND STILL IT ONLY EQUALS A FRACTION OF THE TOTAL ACCUMULATED KNOWLEDGE OF MY RACE!
HOW DID ALL THESE BOOKS MANAGE TO SURVIVE THE WAR ANYWAY?
I WAS A TEACHER OF THE ELEMENTAL SCIENCES-- AGES AGO...
WHEN THE WAR BEGAN, I FORSAW THE OBLITERATION THAT WAS TO FOLLOW, AND I REMOVED ALL THE BOOKS TO AN UNDERGROUND SHELTER ONLY I KNEW ABOUT...
AFTER THE WAR ENDED, I FOUND THAT MY OLD HOME STILL STOOD, SO I TRANSPORTED THE BOOKS TO THIS BASEMENT.
Y-YOU WERE AROUND BEFORE THE WAR?!
!
YES... I AM A VERY OLD MAN--- OLD ENOUGH TO KNOW THAT I SHALL NEVER AGAIN SEE SYILLA AS SHE ONCE WAS... LONG AGO...
TELL ME--- WHAT WAS THE WORLD LIKE BEFORE THE WAR?
OH! WHAT A WONDERFUL CIVILIZATION WE HAD! WHAT BRILLIANCE-- WHAT PROMISE WE SHOWED--
--BEFORE THIS--THIS MECHANICAL CORROSION INFECTED OUR AIR, WE HAD GREAT MACHINES AND GREAT SHIPS...
...AT THE LAST--INDEED, JUST WEEKS BEFORE THE WAR BROKE--WE WERE PLANNING TO EXTEND OUR CIVILIZATION TO OTHER WORLDS!
WHAT?! HOW DO YOU MEAN?


A GREAT STOREHOUSE OF SYLLIRIAN KNOWLEDGE WAS LAUNCHED TO SPREAD OUR CULTURE AND LEARNING THRUOUT THE UNIVERSE--
--A HUGE SPACESHIP-- WITH THE ENTIRE ACCUMULATED KNOWLEDGE OF OUR RACE STORED ABOARD IN AUTOMATED MICRO-TAPES!
I'VE HEARD OF THAT! THE ANCIENT LEGEND ABOUT A GREAT ARK OF LEARNING -- THAT WAS NEVER HEARD FROM AFTER IT EMBARKED
YES-- IT WAS LOST AND FORGOTTEN AFTER THE WAR BROKE OUT.
I WONDER WHAT HAPPENED TO IT?
SAY--!! ARE YOU THINKING WHAT I'M THINKING? IF WE COULD FIND THAT SHIP--
--WE'D HAVE ALL THE COMBINED TEACHINGS OF MY RACE IN ONE NEAT WAD!
--AND WE COULD TOW IT TO MIRA*-- WHERE THE TAPES COULD BE TRANSFERRED TO BOOKS SO THEY COULD BE STORED HERE IN THE LIBRARY ON SYILLA--!
YES!--IF WE COULD FIND IT AFTER 2000 YEARS! --WHERE COULD IT BE?
MIRA-OLIVER'S HOME BASE.
PERHAPS YOU SHOULD LOOK FOR THE GRAVEYARD OF SPACE?
THE WHAT?!
HE'S BAITING US OLIVER! THERE'S NO SUCH PLACE.
OH? THEN HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN THE LEGENDS?
WHAT IN MIRA ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?!
WHAT IS THIS GRAVEYARD OF SPACE?

KIE EXPLAINS...
THE GRAVEYARD OF SPACE IS A SYLLIRIAN FAIRY TALE ABOUT A MAGICAL AREA OF SPACE THAT DRAWS DISABLED SPACESHIPS--
--THERE ARE SUPPOSED TO BE THOUSANDS OF SPACESHIPS FROM COUNTLESS WORLDS GATHERED IN THIS GRAVEYARD!
NONSENSE!
YET--I'VE SEEN AREAS OF SPACE THAT SEEM TO ATTRACT MATTER WITH NO EXPLAINATION--
--MAYBE THIS GRAVEYARD OF SPACESHIPS ISN'T JUST A LEGEND AFTER ALL! MAYBE THE SHIP OF KNOWLEDGE ENDED UP THERE!
WELL WHAT GOOD DOES THAT DO US? WE DON'T KNOW WHERE THE GRAVEYARD IS--EVEN IF IT WERE TRUE!
OH NO?
WHAT?
DON'T TELL ME YOU KNOW WHERE IT IS--
I DON'T KNOW EXACTLY--BUT I MIGHT HAVE A CLUE! LOOK AT THIS ANCIENT BOOK...
IT LOOKS LIKE A STAR CHART.
YES--IT IS BY A PIONEER SPACE PILOT OF THE YEARS BEFORE THE WAR-- KIZ-HIZONG, WHO WAS FLYING AN EXPERIMENTAL VEHICLE IN THIS SECTOR OF SPACE---
--WHEN HIS ENGINES BROKE DOWN! HE BEGAN TO DRIFT... HE DRIFTED FOR DAYS, AND SPENT ALL HIS TIME WORKING ON THE MALFUNCTION..
WHEN HE FINALLY FINISHED AND TOOK THE TIME TO SEE WHERE HE WAS, HE SAW A HUGE WORLD--A PLANET MIND YOU--
--MADE OF DISABLED ROCKETSHIPS!


So...
THAT SETTLES IT! WE'RE HEADING FOR THAT GRAVEYARD OF SPACE!
BUT OLIVER-- THIS IS RIDICULOUS!
SPACE BASE
INCOMING FLIGHTS MUST TAKE OFF AFTER HALF AN HOUR!
DON'T YOU BELIEVE YOUR OWN HISTORY BOOKS, KIE?
-- IT'S JUST THAT I WAS BROUGHT UP ON STORIES ABOUT IT-- AND I ALWAYS THOUGHT THEY WERE JUST THAT-- STORIES!
INTERPLANETARY COMMUNICATIO COMPLEX
I WANT TO SEND A MESSEGE TO THE PLANET MIRA...
YOU'LL HAVE TO WAIT--
(GRUMBLE)
GENERAL BRACKETT!
HELLO OLIVER! I WAS JUST CALLING MIRA TO GET MY PRIVATE SHIP TO COME AND PICK ME UP...
ONLY OPERATO IS ALLOWED IN BOOTH.
KIE, I DON'T SEE HOW YOU SYLLIRIANS LIVE ON THIS PLANET! YOU HAVE TO SEND MESSEGES THRU AN OPERATOR ENCLOSED IN AN AIRTIGHT BOOTH--
--THEN YOU HAVE TO WAIT DAYS FOR AN ANSWER!
--AND BESIDES THAT -- MY METAL ZIPPERS AND BUCKLES HAVE DISSOLVED!
PRIMITIVE! --THAT'S WHAT IT IS!
SEND THIS MESSEGE TO MIRA; TO: JOHN NORTH AND JENNA SENTI-- "HAVE FOUND LEGENDARY GRAVEYARD OF SPACE..."
SPEAK LOUD AND CLEARLY
--WHERE THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF DERELECT SPACESHIPS, AND ONE WITH CARGO OF GREAT IMPORTANCE THAT MUST BE SALVAGED. BRING TRAWLER AND TRY TO GET HERE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE." SIGN THAT "O.J." AND GET IT OFF QUICKLY, OKAY?
YES SIR!
SO THIS INTERPLANETARY DO-GOODER IS GOING TREASURE HUNTING EH? I THINK THE BOSS WOULD LIKE TO HEAR ABOUT THIS!
SNORK! SNORK!

SO... ON A ROCKY FRAGMENT AMIDST THE REMAINS OF A SHATTERED PLANET...
A TREASURE HUNT-?! GRAVEYARD OF SPACE?! WHAT ARE YOU TRYIN' TO HAND ME?
IT'S TRUE BOSS!! THIS OLIVER JARGON GUY SAID--
WHAT?! DID YOU SAY.. OLIVER JARGON?
YEAH BOSS--WHAT'S THE MATTER? ... BOSS--? --??
OLIVER JARGON IS MY MORTAL ENEMY!!! I'D DO ANYTHING TO SHOW UP THAT BRAT!!!
ROUND UP THE BOYS! THIS IS ONE TIME WHERE JARGON IS GOING TO FIND HE'S BEEN BEAT TO THE PUNCH BY... DEADEYE DRISCOLL!
DAYS LATER...
WE'RE READY TO GET UNDER WAY! AS SOON AS JOHN AND JENNA GET HERE, WE'RE HEADING FOR THIS ISOLATED, UNEXPLORED SEGMENT OF SPACE.
..THE SHIP WE'LL BE LOOKING FOR IS CALLED "THE KNOWLEDGE" AND ACCORDING TO THE DESCRIPTIONS IN THE BOOKS, WILL LOOK LIKE THIS.
SNICKER! SNORK!
YOU GOT ALL THAT CHIEF?
ALL OF IT! KEEP TABS ON JARGON! WE'RE GOING TO LEAVE NOW-- HOPEFULLY, WE'LL BEAT JARGON THERE...
AIR TIGHT BAGGIE.
--IF HE'S DELAYED LONG ENOUGH... AND YOU'RE THE SABATUER YOU ALWAYS CLAIMED TO BE!
SNORK! SNORK!
SOON...
JENNA'S HERE WITH THE SPACETRAWLER IN ORBIT, OLIVER! --OH YES... GENERAL BRACKETT?.. YOUR AIDE SENDS THIS MESSEGE: "PRIVATE SHIP CRUSHED BY ROTUNDBEAST! NO HOPE FOR REPAIR!"
ROTUNDBEAST?! OH NO!!

THAT'S JUST MY LUCK! AND THERE WON'T BE A PASSENGER CRUISER IN OPERATION BETWEEN SYILLA AND MIRA FOR DAYS!
COME WITH US THEN GENERAL! YOU'LL GET THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE THE SIGHT OF A LIFETIME!
--WE CAN GET YOU BACK TO MIRA AFTER OUR MISSION IS COMPLETED.
WELL—OKAY... I CAN'T DO MUCH WORSE... I SURE COULDN'T FIND ANYTHING TO DO HERE FOR THAT LONG!
THE PLANET LANDER'S HERE!
I DIDN'T REALIZE AT THE TIME -- TO SABOTAGE JARGON'S SHIP -- WHICH IS IN ORBIT - I'LL HAVE TO GET ABOARD IT -- WHICH MEANS STOWING AWAY ON THIS JOURNEY... WHICH COULD MEAN -- GULP -- DEATH!!
OH WELL -- IF I BOTCH IT DRISCOLL WILL KILL ME ANYWAY!
ZOOM!
JENNA! HEY, GIRL!
HELLO OLIVER. JOHN COULDN'T MAKE IT -- HE HAD TO STAY ON MIRA TO SUPERVISE DEFENSE AGAINST THE ROTUNDBEASTS!
YEAH, I HEARD ABOUT THOSE! THEY GOT MY PRIVATE SHIP!
--AND MOST OF THE SHIPS ON MIRA BASE! THIS WHOLE HERD OF THE THINGS JUST ROLLED OUT OF THE JUNGLE BEFORE WE KNEW WHAT WAS GOING ON!
ANYWAY, JOHN SAID HE'D FOLLOW OUR SIGNALS AND MEET US THERE AFTER HE TAKES CARE OF THE ROTUNDBEASTS.
GOOD! THEN LETS GET UP TO THE TRAWLER AND TAKE OFF -- BEFORE THE PLANET-LANDER DISSOLVES DOWN HERE!
BOY! IT SURE FEELS GOOD TO BE BACK ABOARD A SPACESHIP AGAIN! I'LL TAKE TECHNOLOGY OVER PRIMITIVITY ANY DAY!
WHO'S PRIMITIVE, GENERAL BRACKETT?!
NO OFFENSE, KIE. BUT IF THE SHOE FITS...
...DISSOLVE IT!

WELL, IT'S CLUMSY LOOKING... BUT AT LEAST IT'S GOT POWER.
-- AND NOW... WE'RE OFF TO FIND THE GRAVEYARD OF SPACE!
IF THERE IS SUCH A PLACE!
AND AS OLIVER AND HIS CREW LEAVE SYILLA'S ORBIT...
HAHAHAHA!! WE'RE WAY AHEAD OF JARGON NOW!
WE MIGHT AS WELL TAKE IT EASY BOSS-- JARGON WILL NEVER CATCH US!
AFTER WE GET THERE WE'LL LOOT THE DERELECTS AND SET A TRAP FOR JARGON! I'M GONNA GET RID OF THAT KID ONCE AND FOR ALL!
THIS'LL BE LIKE DESTROYING TWO WORLDS WITH ONE NOVA! YAK! YAK!
DAYS LATER.
OLIVER-- THIS NAVIGATIONAL EQUIPMENT IS FOULED UP! IT SAYS WE'RE GOING EAST-- BUT IF I KNOW THE STARS-- WE'RE HEADED NORTH!
SHH!-- I KNOW, GENERAL! I'VE NOTICED A LOT OF EQUIPMENT MALFUNCTIONS CROPPING UP... I BELIEVE WE'VE GOT A STOWAWAY ON BOARD WHO'S A SABOTEUR!
A SABO-(MF)!
SHH! KIE AND I HAVE A PLAN---
AHEM! SAY OLIVER-- THIS NEW NAVIGATION DEVICE IS REALLY SOMETHING! AMAZING HOW IT TAKES US TO OUR DESTINATION AUTO MATICALLY!
?!
YES, KIE... JUST HOPE THAT NOTHING HAPPENS TO IT-- OR WE'D BE LOST IN SPACE!
!
EAR AT ATTENTION
SO...
SNORK! SNORK!
CLANK! CLUNK!

GOT YOU!
HUH?! WHA-?!
HAH! THAT WAS EASY!
DON'T TRY ANYTHING -- THIS WON'T KILL -- BUT IT NUMBS LIKE HELL!
WHO ARE YOU? WHY ARE YOU TRYING TO THROW US OFF COURSE?
YOU'RE THE WISE GUY -- YOU FIGURE IT OUT!
SAY! I RECOGNIZE HIM! HE'S THE COMMUNICATIONS OPERATOR FROM SPACE BASE!
SO HE IS! BUT IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE -- WHY WOULD A SYLLIRIAN WANT TO KEEP US FROM THE GRAVEYARD?
MAYBE HE'S ANTI-INTILLECTUAL...
WHAT ARE YOU TALKIN' ABOUT? WHY WOULDN'T ANYBODY WANT TO GET A SHARE OF THE TREASURE YOU'RE AFTER?
TREASURE?
I THINK OUR FRIEND HERE IS CONFUSED OLIVER!
WE'RE NOT LOOKING FOR TREASURE, PAL... WE'RE AFTER THE ACCUMULATED KNOWLEDGE OF YOUR ANCESTORS TO PUT INTO THE NEW SYLLIRIAN LIBRARY FOR YOU AND YOUR CHILDREN TO USE!
WHAT?! Y-YOU'RE NOT AFTER -- VALUABLES?!
TSK-TSK! AT THIS MOMENT I'M ASHAMED TO BE A SYLLIRIAN!
HARDLY! FAR AS I KNOW, THIS GRAVEYARD HAS NO DERELECT GALLEONS FILLED WITH GEMS AND JEWELS!
!-- DRISCOLL'S GONNA KILL ME!
OH -- WHY DIDN'T I MIND MY OWN BUSINESS?!
PUT HIM IN THE BACK -- WE'LL DECIDE WHAT TO DO WITH HIM LATER...
COME ON, YOU SKUNK!
IT'S SPARCE SPACE RATIONS FOR YOU FOR THE REST OF THIS JOURNEY MY BUCKO!
WE'LL SEE...

MEANWHILE... ON THE PLANET MIRA, JOHN NORTH COMPLETES HIS CLEAN UP OF THE BASE OF THE RAMPAGING, METAL EATING ROTUNDBEASTS!
ARE THOSE THE LAST COUPLE OF ROTUNDBEASTS?
BURP
GROAN
HIC!
YES SIR! THE MONSTERS HAVE BLOATED THEMSELVES ON SO MUCH METAL THAT THEY CAN'T MOVE!
WHAT A NUISANCE! ROLL THEM OUT INTO THE DUMPER WITH THE REST AND HAUL THEM FAR OUT INTO THE WASTES AND TURN THEM LOOSE.
IVE GOT TO GO!
AYE, AYE!
DELAYS, DELAYS! I'LL HAVE TO TAKE THE ONLY SURVIVING SHIP TO MEET OLIVER. I WONDER WHAT THIS "GRAVEYARD OF SPACE" THING IS..? OLIVER JARGON GETS INVOLVED IN THE WIERDEST DEALS!
BUT UNKNOWN TO JOHN A BLOATED ROTUNDBEAST HAS CRAWLED INTO THE SHIP TO SLEEP OFF ITS HEAVY MEAL...
Z
LUCKY THIS SHIP IS FAST! --I'LL BE TRAVELING TWICE AS FAST AS OLIVER'S TRAWLER!
-I SHOULD GET TO THIS PLACE NOT LONG AFTER HE DOES---
ZOOM
RRRRRR
BOUNCE
BOING
AND DEADEYE DRISCOLL IS GETTING SOME BAD NEWS...
?! JARGON'S JUST ABOUT CAUGHT UP WITH US! BUT-- I THOUGHT WE HAD PLENTY OF TIME---
-WHAT HAPPENED TO MY SABOTEUR?!
WE WON'T BE ABLE TO SET A TRAP NOW...
MAYBE WE OUGHT TO STOP AND FIGHT IT OUT RIGHT HERE!
-TOO RISKY! JARGON'S ALWAYS GOT SOME TRICK UP HIS SLEEVE. THERE'S ONLY ONE THING TO DO---
WE'LL HIDE AMIDST THESE RADAR-CONFUSING CHUNKS OF SPACE DEBRIS--
ZIP!
AND LET JARGON PASS US BY--!

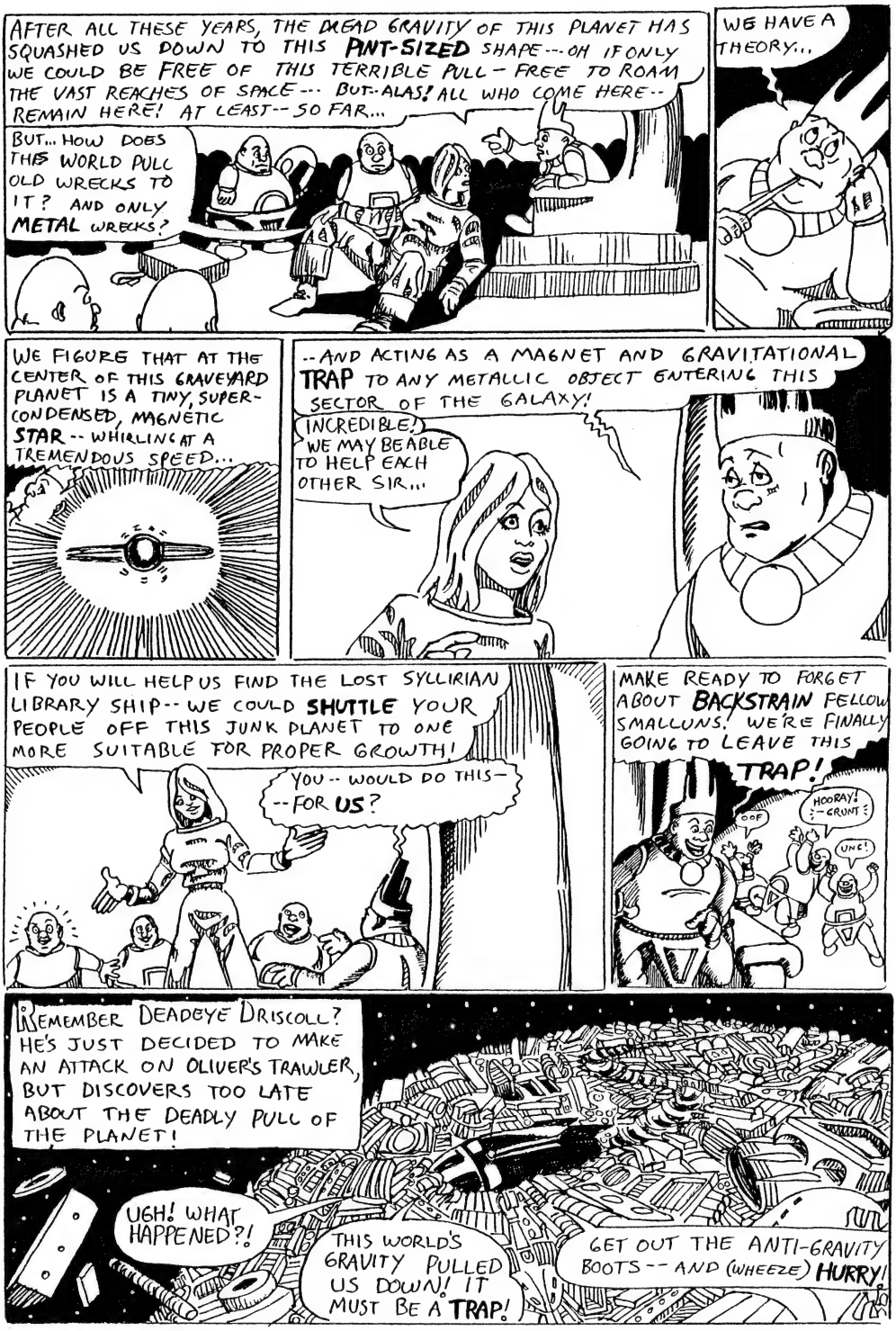
OLIVER--! LOOK AT THAT SPACE DEBRIS! IT'S DRIFTING...
--AND THERE! THERE'S SOME MORE!
IT'S ALL DRIFTING ...TOWARD -- WHAT?
TOWARD A GIGANTIC OBJECT ON RADAR NOT FAR AHEAD NOW! GREAT SCOTT! IT-- IT'S THE SIZE OF A WORLD! AND THAT FORCE! GOOD LORD! THE GRAVITY'S TREMENDOUS!
GET UP FRONT! WE'LL BE ABLE TO SEE IT THERE!
DO YOU STILL SAY THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS THE GRAVEYARD NOW, KIG?
YOU WON'T GET ANY ADMISSIONS FROM ME UNTIL I SEE THE THING!
OH MY STARS!!
GREAT GALLOPING GALAXIES!
FROM NOW ON, I'LL HAVE MORE RESPECT FOR FAIRY TALES!

THEY CIRCLE THE FANTASTIC WORLD OF DEAD SPACE-VESSELS LOOKING FOR "THE KNOWLEDGE"...
BUT...
WELL... IF ITS BEEN ATTRACTED TO THIS PLACE... IT'S SOMEWHERE UNDERNEATH THOUSANDS OF SPACESHIPS!
HOW ARE WE GONNA FIND ONE LONE SHIP AMONGST ALL THESE?
IT'S SURE A PROBLEM--
SOMETHING ELSE IS A PROBLEM TOO, OLIVER-- THE GRAVITATIONAL PULL OF THIS WORLD IS --OVERCOMING OUR ORBIT!!
WHICH MEANS WE'LL CRASH!
WHAM!
DID YOU HEAR A WHAM?
UGH!
SAY-! I-I CAN'T MOVE!
ME EITHER!
THONK!
WUMPH
IT'S THE GRAVITATIONAL PULL OF THIS JUNK PLANET! WE-- WE'LL BE CRUSHED!
NO--I'VE GOT SOME BRACKIUM-BOOTS IN MY CASE, OLIVER --
--IF I CAN JUST GET TO IT!! UGH! OOF!
BRACKIUM-BOOTS! BOOTS WITH THE ANTI-GRAVITY ELEMENT DISCOVERED BY AND NAMED AFTER GENERAL BRACKETT!
WHEW! GENERAL... YOU'RE A LIFESAVER!
WHAT A RELIEF!
WELL... NOW WHAT OLIVER? WE'RE TRAPPED -- LIKE ONE OF THESE DERELECTS!
--AT LEAST UNTIL JOHN GETS HERE...
WELL... SINCE WE ARE TRAPPED -- AND SINCE WE CAN MOVE ABOUT FREELY... I'D LIKE TO EXPLORE A FEW OF THOSE OLD DERELECTS!

HEY! YA KNOW WHAT? WE MIGHT EVEN FIND A CLUE TO "THE KNOWLEDGE."
YOU STAY HERE AND GUARD THE SHIP, WHY DON'T YOU GENERAL?
WHEN JOHN GETS HERE, SIGNAL US THROUGH OUR HEADSETS...
--FINE WITH ME! I DONT GET MY JOLLIES LOOKING THRU OLD GHOST SHIPS...
OLIVER, KIE AND JENNA LEAVE THE TRAWLER...
LET'S EXPLORE THAT ODD-LOOKING SHIP...
LEAVING GENERAL BRACKETT WITH THE PRISONER...
THE FOOLS THINK I'M A SYLLIRIAN-- BUT I'M NOT! I'M REALLY ONE OF DRISCOLL'S SHAPE-SHIFTING CREETURS!
CREETUR NUMBER FOUR THAT IS!
AND-- SINCE I CAN CHANGE MY SHAPE INTO ANY FORM -- I'M GONNA TRY OUT A LITTLE IDEA I'VE BEEN COOKING UP! LUCKY THEY GAVE ME SOME BRACKIUM-BOOTS TOO!
GENERAL BRACKETT!! HELP!
OLIVER!! WHAT-?!
NO TIME TO EXPLAIN! UNTIE ME QUICK!
BUT-- WHAT'S HAPPENED!
WHERE'S THE SYLLIRIAN? WHAT DID HE DO? WHERE IS HE?!
HE'S RIGHT HERE SUCKER!
AWK!
THAT TAKES CARE OF HIM! NOW WHEN JARGON AND HIS FRIENDS RETURN-- THEY'LL GET AN UNPLEASANT SURPRISE!

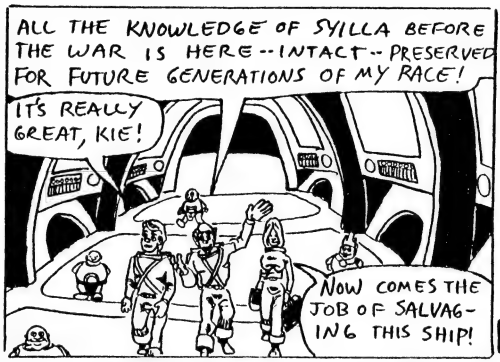
MEANWHILE, OLIVER AND FRIENDS TRAMP THRU AN ANCIENT, ALIEN SPACE-SHIP...
WHAT AN EERIE PLACE THIS IS!
NOW I KNOW WHY THEY CALL THIS PLACE A GRAVE YARD! CREEPY!
--AND I CAN'T GET OVER THE FEELING WE'RE BEING WATCHED --
LOOK HERE OLIVER! THIS HOLE IN THE SIDE OF THE SHIP!
--IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S BEEN --SHAPED--
YES-- AND THERE'S A TUNNEL--
IT LEADS TO ANOTHER SHIP!
MY STARS AND COMETS! ANOTHER HOLE! TO ANOTHER SHIP!
IS IT POSSIBLE THAT ALL OF THESE SHIPS HAVE BEEN CONNECTED?
DON'T SAY THAT! BY WHO?
--OR WHAT?
YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT THE CREEPS?! WELL IVE GOT 'EM TOO!! WHAT KIND OF --THINGS COULD LIVE ON THIS HORRIBLE WORLD?
I DON'T KNOW JENNA-- BUT I HAVE THE FEELING WERE GONNA FIND OUT!
MMF!!

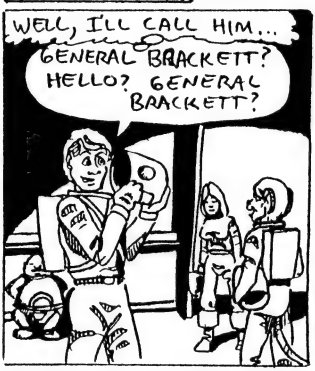
-JENNA? KIE-!! SHE'S GONE!!
WHAT? BUT HOW?!
HERE'S HOW...
THESE CREATURES HAVE BROKEN MY COMMUNICATION DEVICE-- AND TAKEN MY HELMET! THERE'S AN ATMOSPHERE DOWN HERE!
GRUNT!
GROAN..
THEY'RE DRAGGING ME OFF SOMEWHERE! BUT WHERE?
THEY SURE ARE SLOW... MUST BE THE HEAVY GRAVITY -- WAIT! THEIR THOUGHTS* ARE COMING THRU TO ME!
GNOX! TELL GREAT ZIBP WE GOT ONE OF THE BIGUNS
*JENNA IS AN EMPATH--A THOUGHT SENSER...
GET READY TO HOLD A COUNCIL! WE MUST FIND OUT WHAT THESE INTRUDING "BIGUNS" WANT!
--AND DECIDE WHAT ACTION WE MUST TAKE!
UNGH!
OOF
UGH!
IF YOU HAD JUST ASKED ME I WOULD HAVE TOLD YOU WHAT WE WANT!
COUNCIL IS HELD!
OH GREAT ZIBP! THIS FEMALE "BIGUN" CAN CONVERSE WITH US!
IS THAT SO?
SPEAK THEN BIGUN -- WHY DO YOU INVADE OUR SUFFERING DOMAIN?
JENNA EXPLAINS ABOUT THEIR SEARCH FOR "THE KNOWLEDGE".
--SO YOU SEE... WE MEAN YOU NO HARM...
HMM. YOUR WORDS SOUND TRUTHFUL...
BUT I AM AMAZED TO FIND LIFE HERE IN THIS GRAVEYARD OF SPACE! WON'T YOU TELL ME HOW YOU PEOPLE CAME TO LIVE HERE? WHAT RACE ARE YOU? WHAT PLANET ARE YOU FROM?
WE ARE FROM RACES SPAWNED ON MANY WORLDS-- WE ARE THE DESCENDANTS OF THE LUCKLESS PASSENGERS THAT SURVIVED BEING DRAGGED TO THIS METAL WORLD!


AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, THE DREAD GRAVITY OF THIS PLANET HAS SQUASHED US DOWN TO THIS PINT-SIZED SHAPE--OH IF ONLY WE COULD BE FREE OF THIS TERRIBLE PULL - FREE TO ROAM THE VAST REACHES OF SPACE--- BUT--ALAS! ALL WHO COME HERE-- REMAIN HERE! AT LEAST--SO FAR...
BUT... HOW DOES THIS WORLD PULL OLD WRECKS TO IT? AND ONLY METAL WRECKS?
WE HAVE A THEORY...
WE FIGURE THAT AT THE CENTER OF THIS GRAVEYARD PLANET IS A TINY, SUPER-CONDENSED, MAGNETIC STAR -- WHIRLING AT A TREMENDOUS SPEED...
--AND ACTING AS A MAGNET AND GRAVITATIONAL TRAP TO ANY METALLIC OBJECT ENTERING THIS SECTOR OF THE GALAXY!
INCREDIBLE! WE MAY BEABLE TO HELP EACH OTHER SIR...
IF YOU WILL HELP US FIND THE LOST SYLLIRIAN LIBRARY SHIP-- WE COULD SHUTTLE YOUR PEOPLE OFF THIS JUNK PLANET TO ONE MORE SUITABLE FOR PROPER GROWTH!
YOU -- WOULD DO THIS-- --FOR US?
MAKE READY TO FORGET ABOUT BACKSTRAIN FELLOW SMALLUNS. WE'RE FINALLY GOING TO LEAVE THIS TRAP!
OOF
HOORAY! :-GRUNT:
UNG!
REMEMBER DEADEYE DRISCOLL? HE'S JUST DECIDED TO MAKE AN ATTACK ON OLIVER'S TRAWLER, BUT DISCOVERS TOO LATE ABOUT THE DEADLY PULL OF THE PLANET!
UGH! WHAT HAPPENED?!
THIS WORLD'S GRAVITY PULLED US DOWN! IT MUST BE A TRAP!
GET OUT THE ANTI-GRAVITY BOOTS -- AND (WHEEZE) HURRY!

LOOK BOSS! IT'S JARGON'S TRAWLER!
HE'S BEEN TRAPPED TOO! BUT WE'RE GONNA GET THE UPPER HAND!
WE'LL STRIKE FIRST!
SCCCR!...
BLOW A HOLE IN THE SIDE!
LOOK! IT'S JARGON! THE VACUUM'S GOT HIM!
QUICK! GET HIM INTO THE NEXT CHAMBER WITH AIR IN IT!
ACK! CHOKE! GASP!
I DON'T WANT JARGON TO GO THAT EASY!
LOOK--! WELL AS I LIVE AND BREATHE --GENERAL CHARLIE BRACKETT! PASSED OUT AS WELL-- I WONDER WHY--?
JARGON AND BRACKETT IN ONE HAUL--! I CAN'T BELIEVE MY LUCK! PUT SUITS ON 'EM!
TAKE 'EM BACK TO OUR SHIP.
WHAT ABOUT THE OTHERS? WHERE ARE THEY?
I DON'T KNOW AND I DON'T CARE! THIS IS MY BIG CHANCE TO GET EVEN WITH THIS BRAT!
MEANWHILE...
JENNA-! WE'VE BEEN LOST IN THESE COUNTLESS SHIPS LOOKING FOR YOU!
HI OLIVER, KIE...
WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?
JENNA EXPLAINS, AND THE "SMALLUNS" COME OUT OF HIDING...
...AND IN RETURN THEY'LL HELP US FIND THE SHIP WE'RE LOOKING FOR!
GREAT! LETS GO!
SO, THE GREAT SEARCH BEGINS! THE SMALLUNS COMB THEIR PASSAGES FROM ONE END TO THE OTHER...
UNTIL!
LOOK LOOK! THIS IS WHAT YOU SAID TO LOOK FOR!
IT IS!
AT LAST! "THE KNOWLEDGE"!

IT IS INDEED "THE KNOWLEDGE THE SYLLIRIAN ARK OF LEARNING. THE SMALLUNS REJOICE THAT THEY WILL SOON BE SHUTTLED OFF THE JUNK WORLD--AND THE "BIGUNS" REJOICE THAT THEIR QUEST HAS ENDED!


ALL THE KNOWLEDGE OF SYLLA BEFORE THE WAR IS HERE--INTACT--PRESERVED FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS OF MY RACE!
IT'S REALLY GREAT, KIE!
NOW COMES THE JOB OF SALVAGING THIS SHIP!



YEEK! A ROTUNDBEAST!! IT'S EATEN MY PROPULSION UNIT!
CHOMP! GULP! MUNCH!
PROPULSION
NOW IT'S GOBBLING DOWN TASTY METAL BULKHEADS FOR DESSERT!

OH ME! OH MY!...WHAT AM I GONNA DO WITH NO WAY TO MOVE MY SHIP?
THE GRAVITATIONAL PULL OF THE GRAVEYARD WORLD STARTS TO PULL ON THE SPACESHIP...

MEANWHILE... OLIVER, JENNA, AND KIE HAVE RETURNED TO THE TRAWLER.
GENERAL BRACKETT! HE'S NOWHERE AROUND!
-- NEITHER IS OUR PRISONER!
GET ON THE RADIO-- JOHN SHOULD BE HERE ANY TIME -- IF HE'S NOT WARNED -- HE'LL BE TRAPPED BY THE GRAVITY HERE TOO!
?
UH OH! OLIVER! SPEAKING OF JOHN--
ZOOM!
KLUNK!
GROAN!! THERE GOES OUR ONLY HOPE OF RESCUE!
WE'VE GOT TO GET OVER THERE AND SEE IF JOHN'S HURT!
MINUTES LATER...
JOHN! THANK THE STARS YOU'RE ALL RIGHT!
SSSSSS
WHO'S ALRIGHT?! I'M BEATEN, BATTERED AND BRUISED!
WHERE'S THE ROTUNDBEAST?
WHAT? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
SSSSSSS
A STOWAWAY ROTUNDBEAST ATE MY PROPULSION UNIT -- THAT'S WHY I DIDN'T GO INTO ORBIT
THERE'S WHERE IT WENT!
GREAT SCOTT!! RIGHT THRU THE SIDE -- STRAIGHT DOWN INTO THE DERELECTS BELOW!
-WHAT A FEAST IT MUST BE HAVING!
OLIVER AND JOHN RETURN TO THE TRAWLER...
OLIVER -- THAT DERELECT OVER THERE HAS LIGHTS ON INSIDE-!
YOU'RE RIGHT-- SAY! WHAT'S THAT INSIGNIA ON THE SIDE?
D
DEADEYE DRISCOLL!!
THE TERRIBLE DEADEYE DRISCOLL!

BACK TO THE TRAWLER! WE'VE GOT TO HAVE A PLAN--!
IF I SEE THINGS CLEARLY, IT WAS DRISCOLL WHO MADE THAT HOLE IN OUR SHIP--!
--AND KIDNAPPED GENERAL BRACKETT!
MOAN--THIS ADVENTURE HAS TURNED INTO A DISASTER!
I DON'T SEE HOW ANYTHING ELSE COULD POSSIBLY GO WRONG!
I SPOKE TOO SOON!
DECIEVERS! LIERS! YOU TRIED TO TRICK US! YOU MADE US HELP YOU FIND THAT SHIP WITHOUT ANY INTENTION OF SAVING US! REMOVE THEIR BOOTS!
BUT YOU'RE WRONG! WE WERE GOING TO SAVE YOU--
--BUT NOW WE'RE TRAPPED OURSELVES!
THAT'S WHAT WE TOLD THEM OLIVER! BUT THEY WOULDN'T BELIEVE US!
AND WE STILL DON'T! TIE THE BIGUNS UP! WE'LL FIGURE OUT WHAT TO DO WITH THEM LATER!
WHOMP!
WHAT MADE THE SMALL-UNS SO CRABBY ALL OF A SUDDEN?
UGH! THIS GRAVITY IS TOO MUCH!
MUST HAVE BEEN THE DISAPPOINTMENT OF FINDING OUT THAT THEY WOULDN'T BE SAVED AFTER ALL!
YES... CAN YOU IMAGINE THE LIFE THESE POOR LITTLE PEOPLE MUST LEAD ON THIS GHASTLY JUNK-WORLD?
IF ONLY WE COULD SAVE THEM!
LISTEN--! GENERAL BRACKETT'S BEEN ABDUCTED BY DEADEYE DRISCOLL! WE HAVE TO SAVE HIM FIRST!
WHAT?! DEAD-EYE DRISCOLL?
IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE WE'LL BE SAVING ANY-BODY!
MEANWHILE... EVERYONE'S FORGOTTEN ABOUT THE METAL-EATING ROTUNDBEAST... WHO IS HAPPILY MUNCHING HIS WAY DEEPER AND DEEPER INTO THE PLANET OF SPACESHIPS...
CRUNCH! CRUNCH! CRUNCH! MUNCH! MUNCH! GULP! SLURP!

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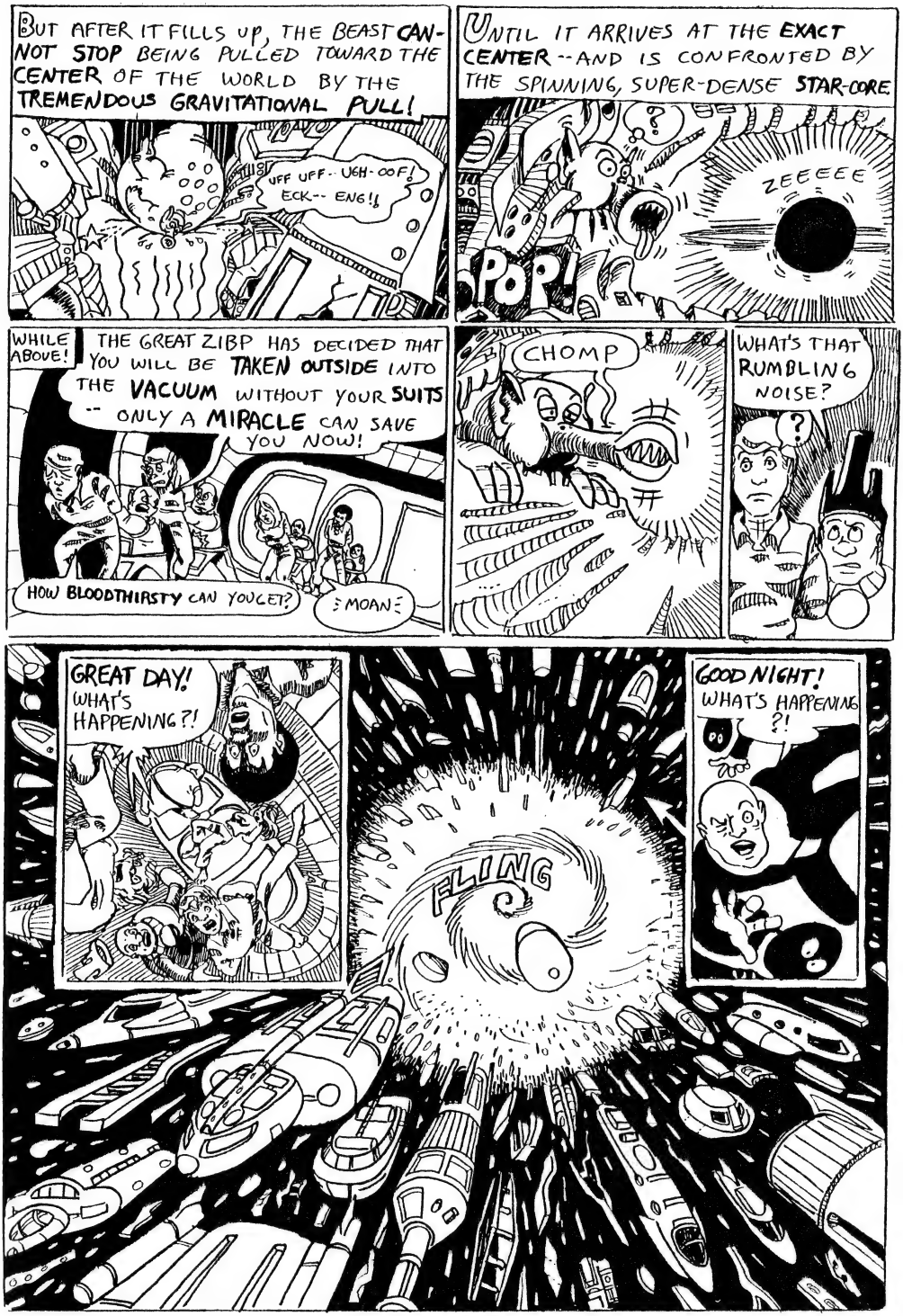
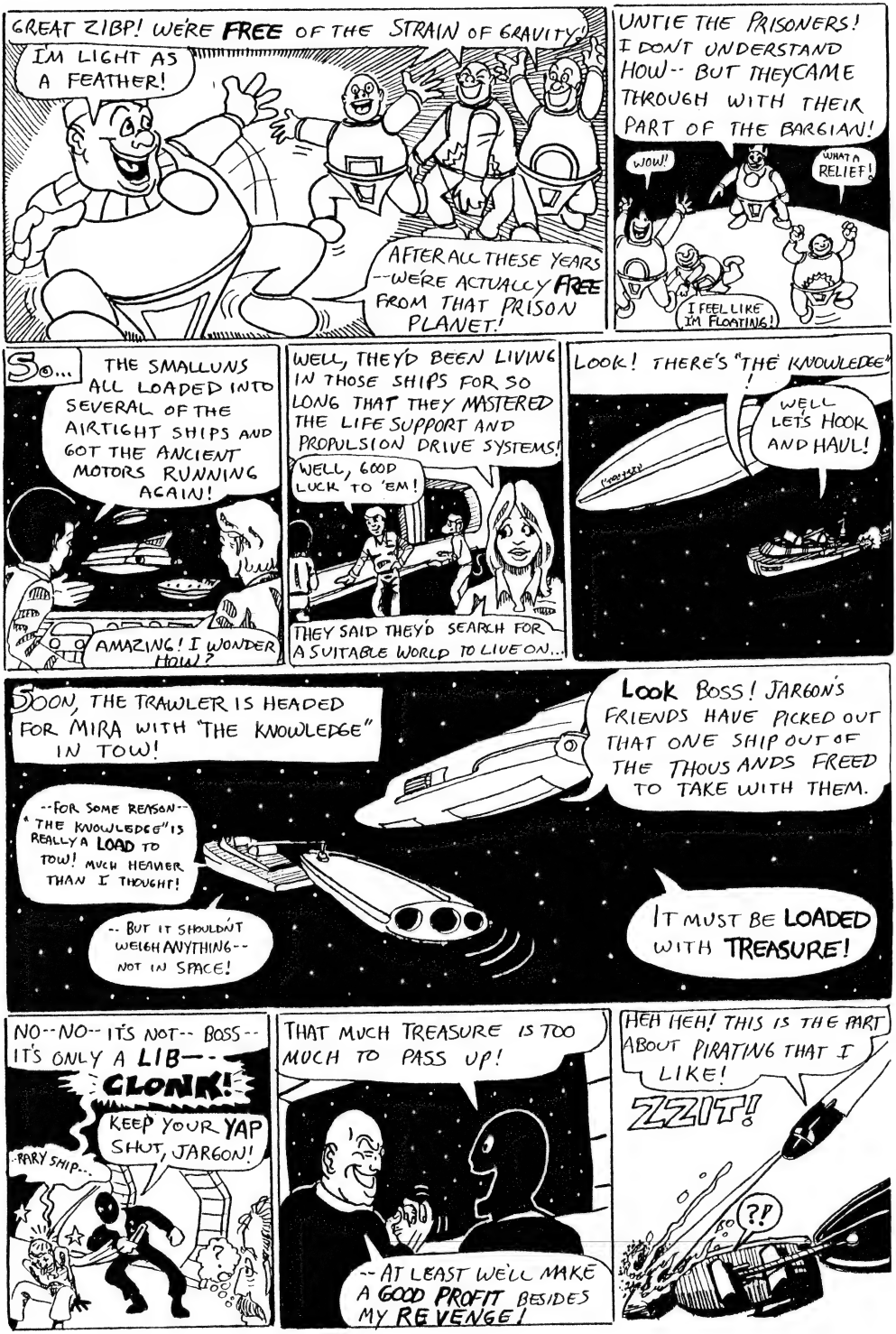
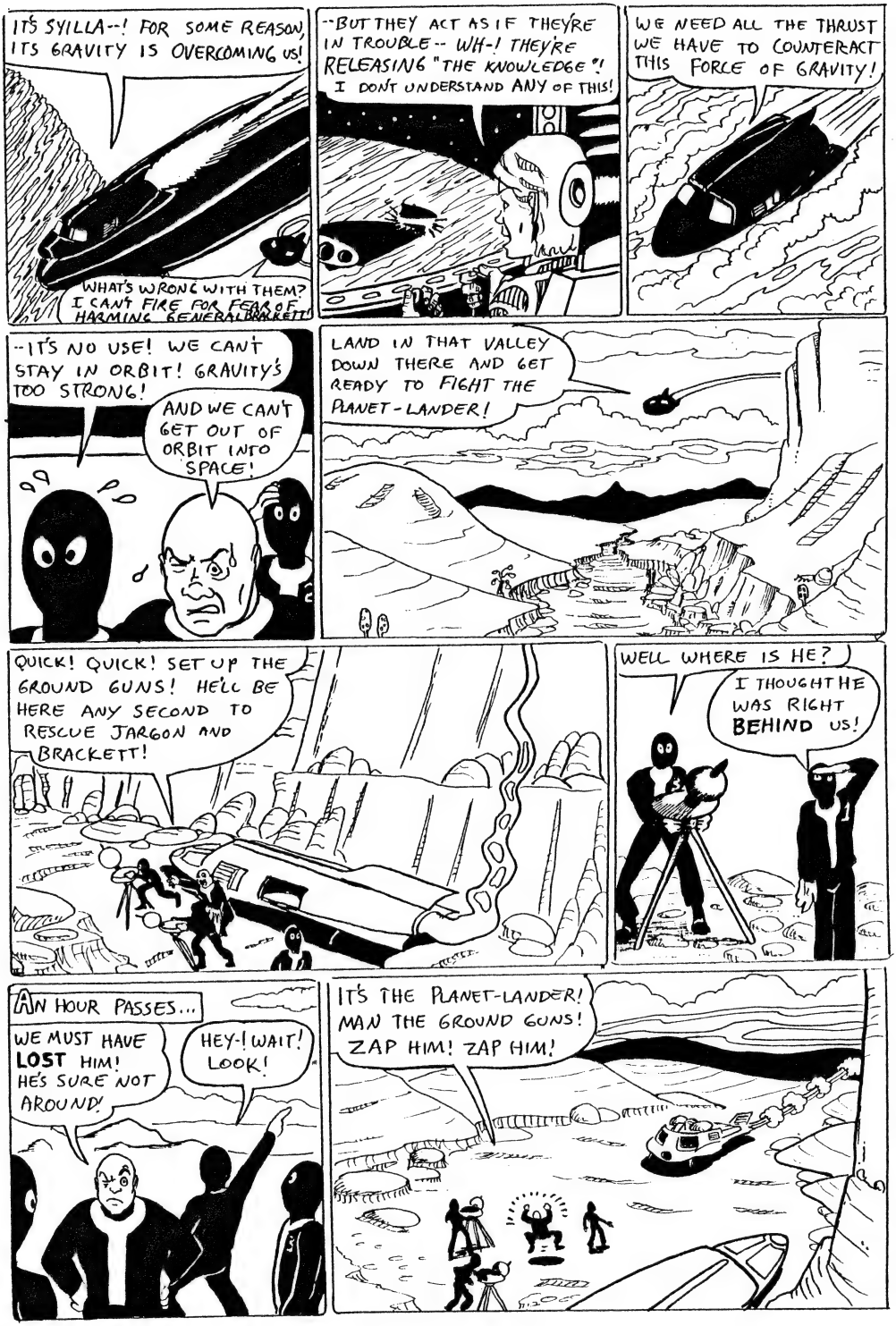
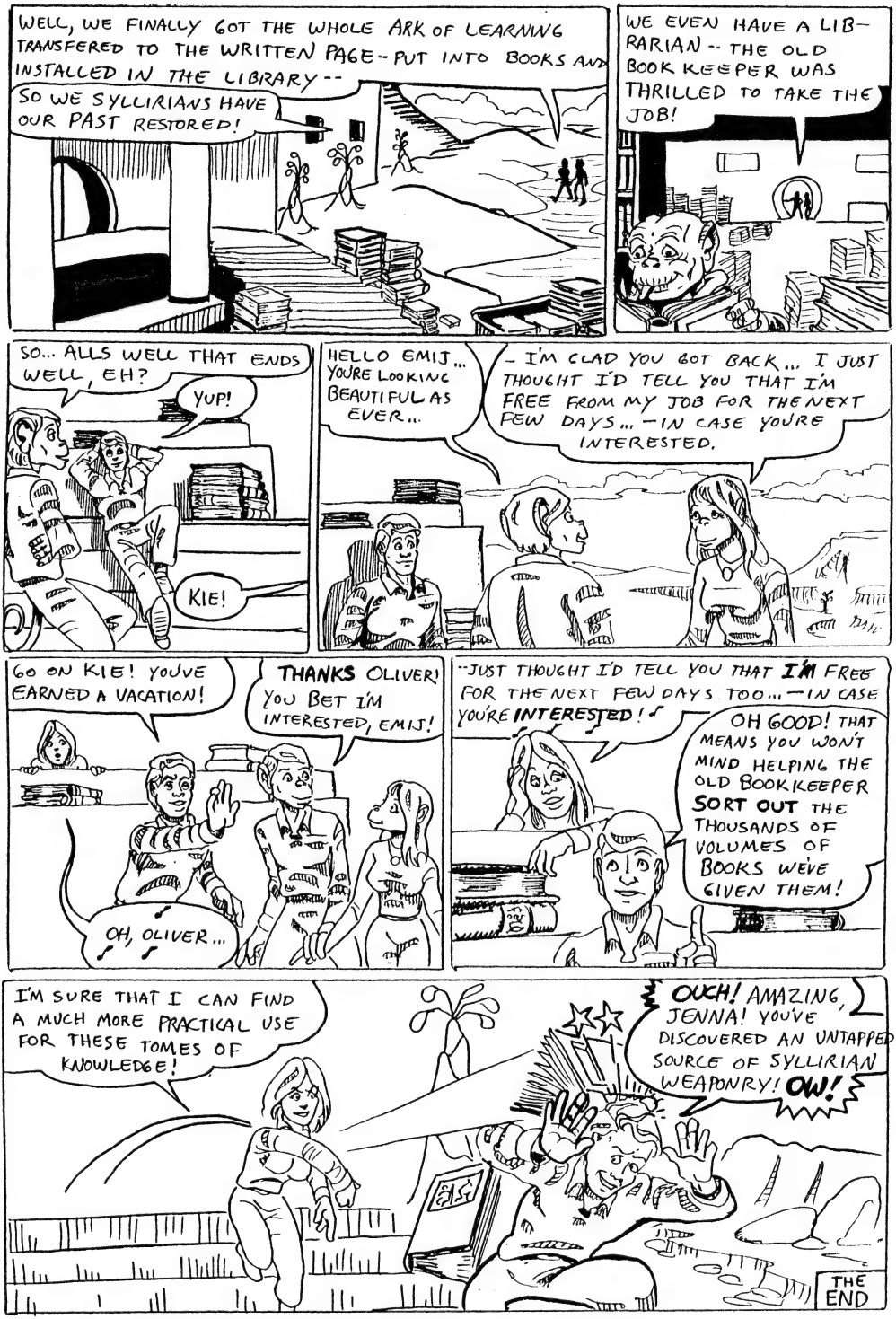

BUT AFTER IT FILLS UP, THE BEAST CANNOT STOP BEING PULLED TOWARD THE CENTER OF THE WORLD BY THE TREMENDOUS GRAVITATIONAL PULL!
UFF UFF-- UGH-OOF! ECK-- ENG!
UNTIL IT ARRIVES AT THE EXACT CENTER--AND IS CONFRONTED BY THE SPINNING, SUPER-DENSE STAR-CORE
?
ZEEEEE
POP!
WHILE ABOVE!
THE GREAT ZIBP HAS DECIDED THAT YOU WILL BE TAKEN OUTSIDE INTO THE VACUUM WITHOUT YOUR SUITS -- ONLY A MIRACLE CAN SAVE YOU NOW!
HOW BLOODTHIRSTY CAN YOU GET?
:MOAN:
CHOMP
WHAT'S THAT RUMBLING NOISE?
?
GREAT DAY! WHAT'S HAPPENING?!
FLING
GOOD NIGHT! WHAT'S HAPPENING?!


GREAT ZIBP! WE'RE FREE OF THE STRAIN OF GRAVITY!
I'M LIGHT AS A FEATHER!
AFTER ALL THESE YEARS --WE'RE ACTUALLY FREE FROM THAT PRISON PLANET!
UNTIE THE PRISONERS! I DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW-- BUT THEY CAME THROUGH WITH THEIR PART OF THE BARGIAN!
WOW!
WHAT A RELIEF!
I FEEL LIKE I'M FLOATING!
SO... THE SMALLUNS ALL LOADED INTO SEVERAL OF THE AIRTIGHT SHIPS AND GOT THE ANCIENT MOTORS RUNNING AGAIN!
AMAZING! I WONDER HOW!?
WELL, THEY'D BEEN LIVING IN THOSE SHIPS FOR SO LONG THAT THEY MASTERED THE LIFE SUPPORT AND PROPULSION DRIVE SYSTEMS!
WELL, GOOD LUCK TO 'EM!
THEY SAID THEY'D SEARCH FOR A SUITABLE WORLD TO LIVE ON...
LOOK! THERE'S "THE KNOWLEDGE"!
WELL LET'S HOOK AND HAUL!
SOON, THE TRAWLER IS HEADED FOR MIRA WITH "THE KNOWLEDGE" IN TOW!
--FOR SOME REASON-- "THE KNOWLEDGE" IS REALLY A LOAD TO TOW! MUCH HEAVIER THAN I THOUGHT!
-- BUT IT SHOULDN'T WEIGH ANYTHING-- NOT IN SPACE!
LOOK BOSS! JARGON'S FRIENDS HAVE PICKED OUT THAT ONE SHIP OUT OF THE THOUSANDS FREED TO TAKE WITH THEM.
IT MUST BE LOADED WITH TREASURE!
NO--NO-- IT'S NOT-- BOSS-- IT'S ONLY A LIB--
CLONK!
KEEP YOUR YAP SHUT, JARGON!
-RARY SHIP...
THAT MUCH TREASURE IS TOO MUCH TO PASS UP!
-- AT LEAST WE'LL MAKE A GOOD PROFIT BESIDES MY REVENGE!
HEH HEH! THIS IS THE PART ABOUT PIRATING THAT I LIKE!
ZZIT!
?!

OLIVER!! SOMEONE'S FIRING ON US!
B-V-R-O-O-M!
OH NO! I FORGOT ALL ABOUT DRISCOLL!
HOW COULD I FORGET THAT HE'S GOT GENERAL BRACKETT WITH HIM?
WHAP!
THIS SUPERMAGNET REALLY DOES ITS STUFF!
ZOOM
SWAP!
HEY!! HE'S STOLEN "THE KNOWLEDGE"!!
I DON'T GET IT! I THOUGHT HE WAS AFTER ME!
WHY WOULD HE WANT "THE KNOWLEDGE?"
WE CAN'T LET HIM HAVE IT! WE'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING!
DON'T LOSE YOUR HEAD, KIE!
YOU AND JENNA FOLLOW IN THE TRAWLER-- I'M GOING AFTER DRISCOLL IN THE PLANET LANDER!
SOB!! AFTER ALL WE'VE BEEN THRU!
DAM! WHAM!
REALLY, KIE!
TAKE CARE, HUH?
I HOPE I CAN CATCH DRISCOLL! SHOULDN'T BE MUCH OF A PROBLEM SINCE HE'LL BE LOADED DOWN!
SOON...
THERE HE IS! HE'S SLOWER THAN I THOUGHT! "THE KNOWLEDGE" IS TOO HEAVY FOR HIM TO HAUL FOR SOME REASON!
GRUNT! TUG!
WONDERING WHY?
WHERE DID THIS BEAST COME FROM?
UGH GRDAN!
IT MUST HAVE BEEN ON THAT TREASURE SHIP! IT'S EATEN THRU TO US!
UNG! IT'S SO HEAVY--! IT CAN'T BE BUDGED!
MOVE YOU BIG FAT#@☆?!
UGH! BURP!
THE LOOK OF AN OVERSTUFFED ROTUNDBEAST!
NO USE! I DON'T KNOW WHY IT'S SO HEAVY...
--BUT FORGET IT! WE'VE GOT COMPANY! IT'S THE PLANET-LANDER-- FROM THE TRAWLER!
--ONE OF JARGON'S FRIENDS! PROBABLY THAT BIG-EARED SYLLIRIAN, KIE! ZAP 'IM!!
AWK! OUR SHOTS WENT WILD!
WHAT'S THE MATTER?
WE--WE'RE GOING OFF OUR COURSE! --TOWARD THAT PLANET!
ZZIT
WHAT PLANET?

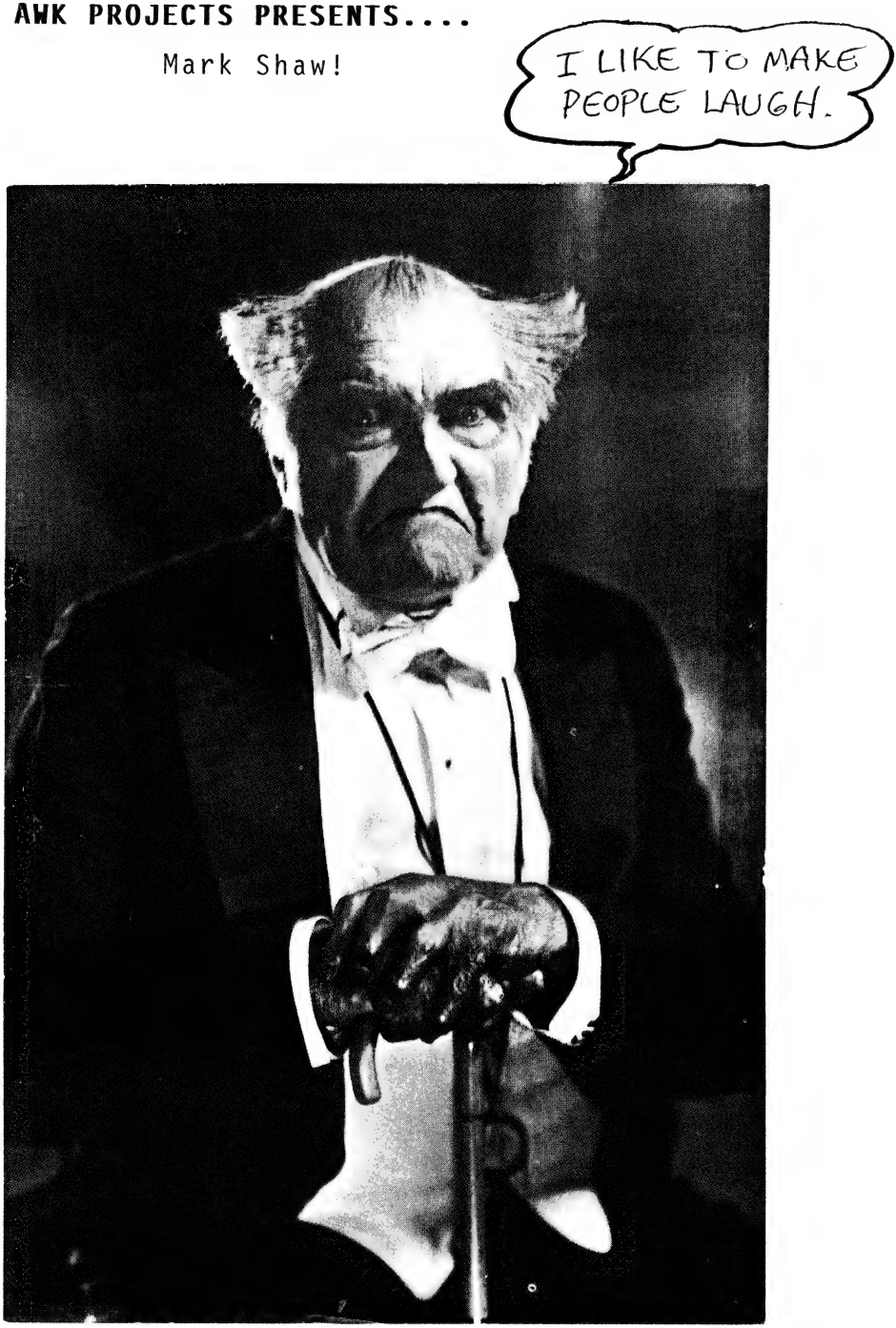

IT'S SYILLA--! FOR SOME REASON, ITS GRAVITY IS OVERCOMING US!
WHAT'S WRONG WITH THEM? I CAN'T FIRE FOR FEAR OF HARMING GENERAL BRACKETT!
--BUT THEY ACT AS IF THEY'RE IN TROUBLE-- WH-! THEY'RE RELEASING "THE KNOWLEDGE"! I DON'T UNDERSTAND ANY OF THIS!
WE NEED ALL THE THRUST WE HAVE TO COUNTERACT THIS FORCE OF GRAVITY!
--IT'S NO USE! WE CAN'T STAY IN ORBIT! GRAVITY'S TOO STRONG!
AND WE CAN'T GET OUT OF ORBIT INTO SPACE!
LAND IN THAT VALLEY DOWN THERE AND GET READY TO FIGHT THE PLANET-LANDER!
QUICK! QUICK! SET UP THE GROUND GUNS! HE'LL BE HERE ANY SECOND TO RESCUE JARGON AND BRACKETT!
WELL WHERE IS HE?
I THOUGHT HE WAS RIGHT BEHIND US!
AN HOUR PASSES...
WE MUST HAVE LOST HIM! HE'S SURE NOT AROUND!
HEY-! WAIT! LOOK!
IT'S THE PLANET-LANDER! MAN THE GROUND GUNS! ZAP HIM! ZAP HIM!

!
GRUMBLE
I FORGOT-- THIS IS SYILLA!
--NO METAL ON SYILLA!
WELL I'VE STILL GOT JARGON AS A HOSTAGE! COME ANY CLOSER AND I'LL STRANGLE HIM!
GO RIGHT AHEAD!
-!!- JARGON!!
WHA-?! BUT HOW--!!
HEH-HEH! HI BOSS!
HELLO BROTHER! HAVE YOU GOT SOME EXPLAINING TO DO!
YOU BUNGLING IDIOT!! YOU LOST ME EVERY-THING!!
ACK! ECK!
TSK! TSK! HOW UNSIGHTLY! VIOLENCE BREEDS VIOLENCE! I BELIEVE THESE CRIMINAL TYPES NEED REHABILITATION!
I BELIEVE YOU'RE RIGHT GENERAL!
SO, DRISCOLL AND HIS CREETURS (ONE THRU FOUR) ARE CARTED OFF TO THE INTERPLANETARY PRISON PLANET WHERE THEY ARE PUT TO HARD LABOR...
WHAT GETS ME IS THAT I STILL CAN'T FIGURE OUT WHAT WENT WRONG!
OH SHUT UP AND SHOVEL!
THE WAY I SEE IT, IT WAS THE ROTUNDBEAST THAT LOOSED THE SPACESHIPS FROM THE GRAVEYARD-- HE MUST HAVE TUNNELED RIGHT TO THE CORE AND EATEN IT!
HIC!
--THEN... HE GAINED THE DENSITY AND WEIGHT OF THE CORE-AT LEAST BEFORE HE DIGESTED IT-- WHICH FORCED DRISCOLL'S SHIP TOWARD THE NEAREST GRAVITATIONAL PULL-- WHICH, LUCKILY, HAPPENED TO BE SYILLA!
OOF
CARGO LOADING
-THEN I JUST WAITED-- AND LET SYILLAS COROS-SIVE ATMOSPHERE DO A JOB ON DRISCOLL'S WEAPONS! CHILD'S PLAY!
UNCH!


WELL, WE FINALLY GOT THE WHOLE ARK OF LEARNING TRANSFERED TO THE WRITTEN PAGE -- PUT INTO BOOKS AND INSTALLED IN THE LIBRARY --
SO WE SYLLIRIANS HAVE OUR PAST RESTORED!
WE EVEN HAVE A LIBRARIAN -- THE OLD BOOK KEEPER WAS THRILLED TO TAKE THE JOB!
SO... ALLS WELL THAT ENDS WELL, EH?
YUP!
KIE!
HELLO EMIJ... YOURE LOOKING BEAUTIFUL AS EVER...
- I'M GLAD YOU GOT BACK... I JUST THOUGHT I'D TELL YOU THAT I'M FREE FROM MY JOB FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS... - IN CASE YOURE INTERESTED.
GO ON KIE! YOUVE EARNED A VACATION!
THANKS OLIVER! YOU BET I'M INTERESTED, EMIJ!
OH, OLIVER...
"JUST THOUGHT I'D TELL YOU THAT I'M FREE FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS TOO... - IN CASE YOU'RE INTERESTED!
OH GOOD! THAT MEANS YOU WON'T MIND HELPING THE OLD BOOKKEEPER SORT OUT THE THOUSANDS OF VOLUMES OF BOOKS WE'VE GIVEN THEM!
I'M SURE THAT I CAN FIND A MUCH MORE PRACTICAL USE FOR THESE TOMES OF KNOWLEDGE!
OUCH! AMAZING, JENNA! YOU'VE DISCOVERED AN UNTAPPED SOURCE OF SYLLIRIAN WEAPONRY! OW!
THE END

AWK PROJECTS PRESENTS....

Mark Shaw!



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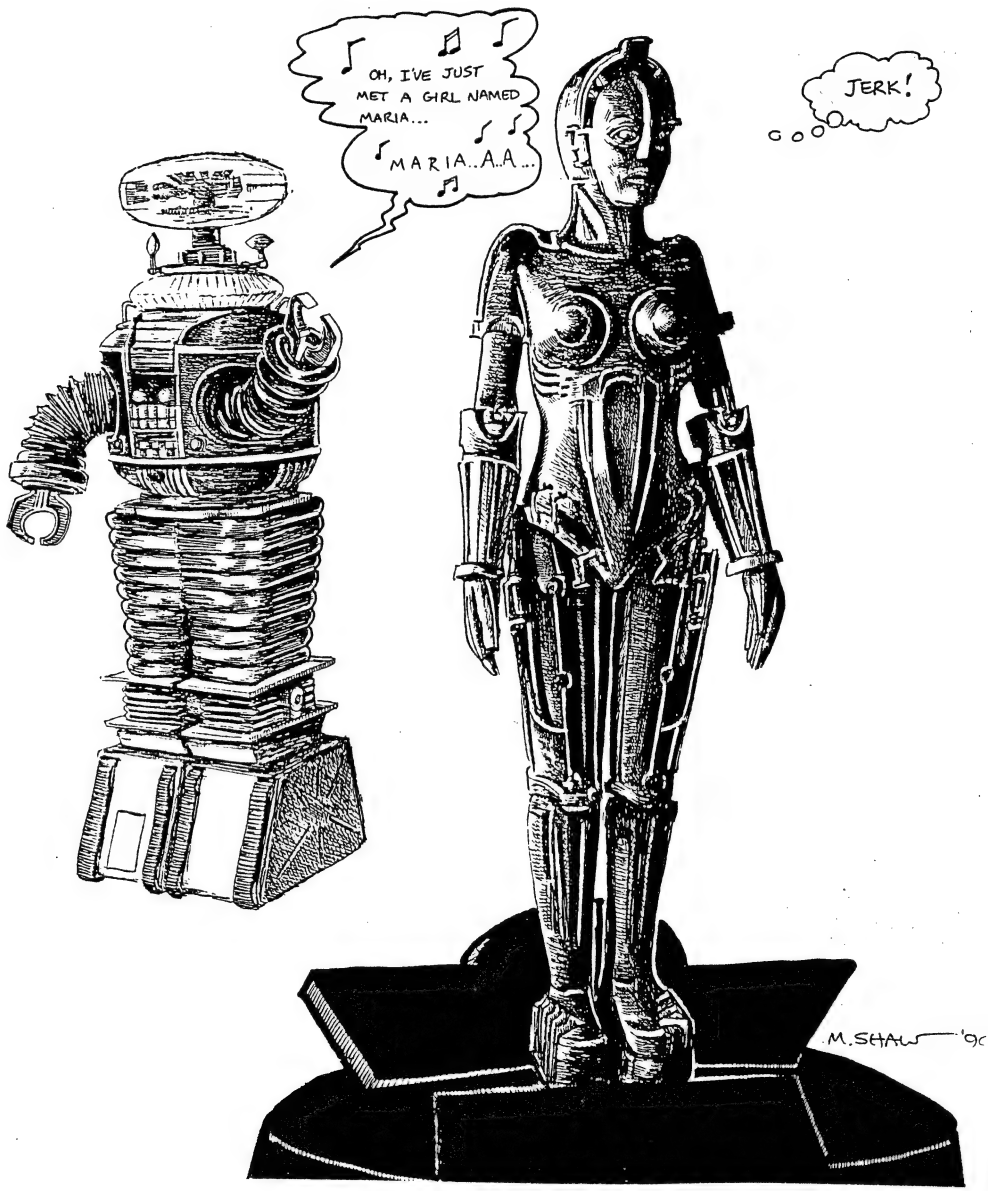
GREAT MOMENTS IN SCIENCE FICTION

The LOST IN SPACE robot meets
MARIA from METROPOLIS...



SOLDIER BOY

WORLD WAR II--- AND A COLD, CLUTCHING RAIN FALLS OVER THE SHELLTORN FRENCH COUNTRYSIDE--- HOURS BEFORE, BOMBS HAD FALLEN INSTEAD OF RAIN... BLASTING AND BATTERING THE EARS OF HAROLD SLOAN...HE CROUCHED, WITH HIS COMPANIONS, MISERABLE AND FREEZING, WISHING THE DOWNPOUR WOULD STOP -- AND AT THE SAME TIME DREADING ITS END... FOR THAT WOULD SIGNAL HIS TROOPS' ADVANCE ONCE MORE...

YOU NERVOUS ABOUT SOMETHIN' SLOAN?

AIN'T YOU SARGE? WHAT WITH THAT NAZI DEATH SQUAD REPORTED IN THE AREA, I'M JITTERY AS HELL!

PRIVATE FIRST CLASS HAROLD SLOAN, 18 YEARS OLD AND RIGHT OUT OF SCHOOL. WHAT WAS HE DOING HERE IN FRANCE, DODGING BULLETS AND BOMBS, FIGHTING, RISKING HIS LIFE FOR IDEALS HE BARELY UNDERSTOOD?

THAT DEATH SQUAD HAS QUITE A RER-- THAT'S FOR SURE. THEY'VE TRIED TO GET THIS PARTICULAR NAZI TROOP FOR WEEKS WITH NO LUCK!

--THEY'RE A PARTICULARLY NASTY SQUAD-- THEY WEAR GAS-MASKS AND SPORT SKULL ARM BANDS!

SLOAN WAS RELIGIOUS...HE HADN'T TAKEN A LIFE IN THIS WAR YET, AND IF HE HAD HIS WAY, HE NEVER WOULD. NOT THAT HE WOULDN'T PULL THE TRIGGER IF HE WAS FORCED TO...

THOSE HUNS ARE MERCILESS KILLERS! AND THIS DEATH SQUAD IS CHOCK FULL OF THE BEST NAZI PROFESSIONALS!

STORY by M. SHAW ART BY MIKE VIRES

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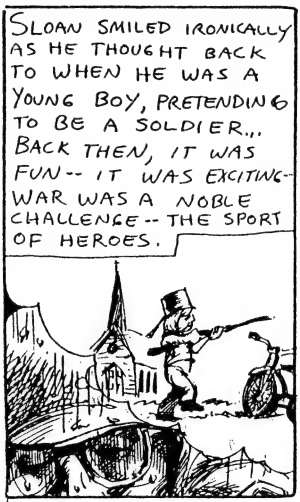
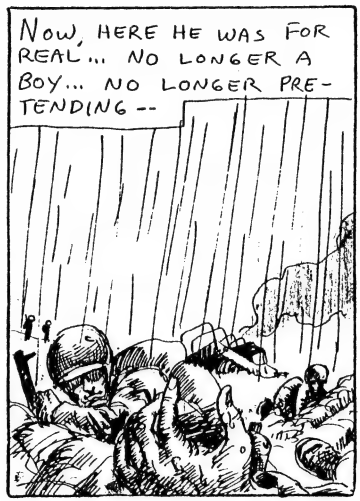
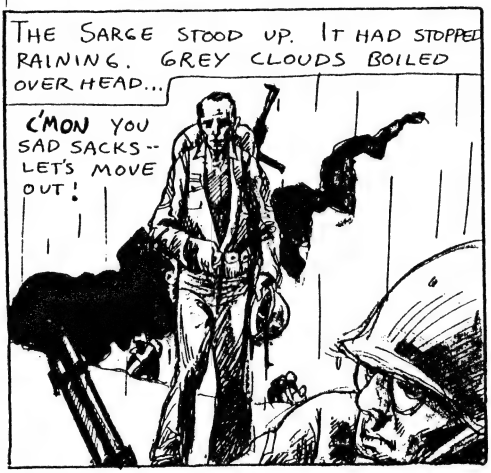

SLOAN SMILED IRONICALLY AS HE THOUGHT BACK TO WHEN HE WAS A YOUNG BOY, PRETENDING TO BE A SOLDIER... BACK THEN, IT WAS FUN -- IT WAS EXCITING-- WAR WAS A NOBLE CHALLENGE -- THE SPORT OF HEROES.

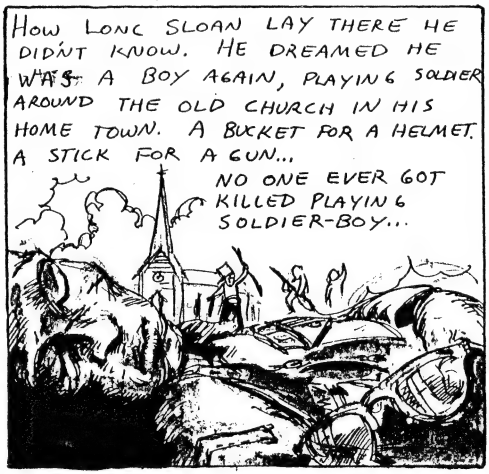

NOW, HERE HE WAS FOR REAL... NO LONGER A BOY... NO LONGER PRE-TENDING --

AND HE DISCOVERED THAT DEATH WAS NEITHER NOBLE OR HEROIC---


THE SARGE STOOD UP. IT HAD STOPPED RAINING. GREY CLOUDS BOILED OVER HEAD...
C'MON YOU SAD SACKS -- LET'S MOVE OUT!

THEY MOVED DOWN INTO A GREEN VALLEY. SUDDENLY, SHOTS SOUNDED FAR UP AHEAD, AND THE NOISE OF FIGHTING...
IT MUST BE SOME OF OUR BOYS AGAINST THE DEATH SQUAD!
WE GOTTA HELP EM OUT!

BUT AS THEY RAN TOWARD THE TREES, THEY TRIGGERED A FIELD FULL OF LAND MINES!
TWISTING, TEARING PAIN FILLED SLOAN'S MIND AS ALL WENT BLACK!


HOW LONG SLOAN LAY THERE HE DIDN'T KNOW. HE DREAMED HE WAS A BOY AGAIN, PLAYING SOLDIER AROUND THE OLD CHURCH IN HIS HOME TOWN. A BUCKET FOR A HELMET. A STICK FOR A GUN...
NO ONE EVER GOT KILLED PLAYING SOLDIER-BOY...

SLOAN CAME BACK TO HIS GRIM POSITION IN THE PRESENT. HE OPENED HIS EYES AND SQUINTED THRU A BLUR OF PAIN AND TEARS. HE HEARD VOICES -- HIGH PITCHED AND MUFFLED SOUNDING.

LOOKING AROUND HIM, HE SAW THE REMAINS OF HIS FELLOW SOLDIERS. ALL WERE DEAD. AN ACHING, BITTER LONLINESS STABBED HIS HEART AS HE LOOKED UPON THEIR LIFELESS SHREDED BODIES. FURY WELLED UP WITHIN HIM -- FURY AND HATE FOR THIS WAR.

THEN HE HEARD THE VOICES AGAIN. BEHIND HIM. HE WRENCHED AROUND, IGNORING THE SHARP PAIN IN HIS SIDE.

HE SAW FOUR SQUAT FIGURES WEARING **GAS MASKS** AND **SKULL ARM BANDS**

FEAR AND ANGER ROSE IN HIS HEART SIMULTANEOUSLY. THE FIGURES LOOKED GROTESQUE.

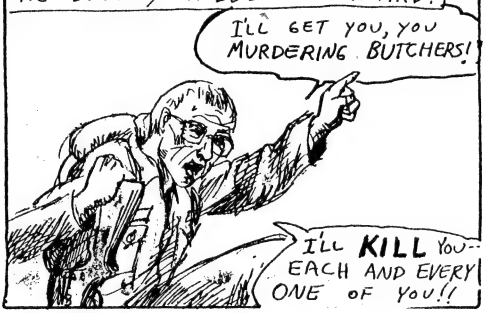
VAGUELY, HE WONDERED WHY THE NAZIS LOOKED SO **SHORT**. HE DREW HIS PISTOL...

AT LEAST I'LL GET SOME OF **YOU** BEFORE YOU FINISH **ME** OFF!

TWO OF THE FOUR DROPPED TO THE GROUND, DEAD.

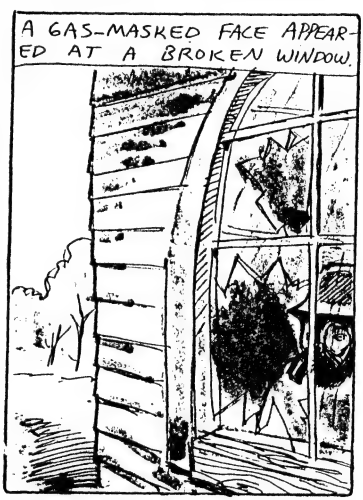
TO SLOAN'S SURPRISE, INSTEAD OF SHOOTING HIM, THE REMAINING TWO NAZIS TURNED AND FLED!

ANGERED, STRENGTH FILLED HIM. HE STRUGGLED TO HIS FEET, HISSING SHARPLY THROUGH HIS TEETH AS WAVES OF PAIN WASHED OVER HIM. THEN, USING HIS RIFLE AS A SUPPORT, HE SLOWLY HOBBLED FORWARD.



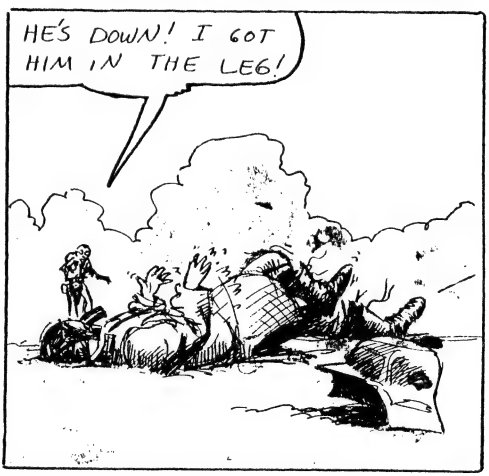
SLOAN STUMBLED THROUGH THE TREES, FOLLOWING THE TRAIL OF THE FLEEING NAZIS. HIS MIND, THOUGH DULL WITH AGONY, WONDERED WHY THEY HAD NOT SHOT HIM, HELPLESS AS HE HAD BEEN? PERHAPS THEY WERE LEADING HIM INTO A TRAP -- BUT WHY BOTHER? SUDDENLY HE ENTERED A CLEARING --
WHAT'S THAT?! A... A CHURCH! BUT THAT MUST MEAN...

A WAVE OF OUTRAGE GRIPPED SLOAN...
THOSE CRAVEN NAZIS MUST HAVE HIDDEN IN THE CHURCH! GOD! IT--IT'S SACRILAGE!!

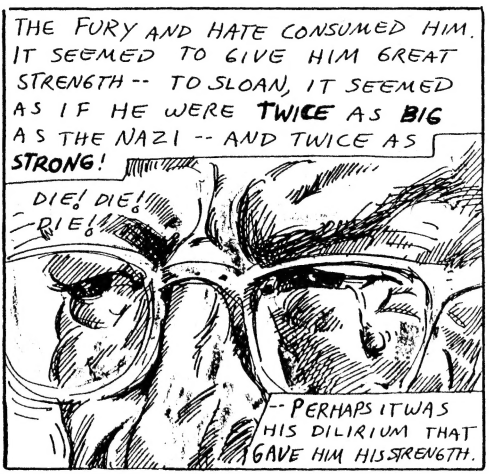

A GAS-MASKED FACE APPEARED AT A BROKEN WINDOW.

SLOAN'S PISTOL BARKED.
GOT YA, YA BLASTED HUN!
BLAM!
AAAAAA--

A NOISE FROM THE BACK OF THE CHURCH ALERTED THE SUFFERING SLOAN THAT THE FOURTH NAZI WAS TRYING TO ESCAPE.
NO YA DON'T!!
BANG BANG


HE'S DOWN! I GOT HIM IN THE LEG!

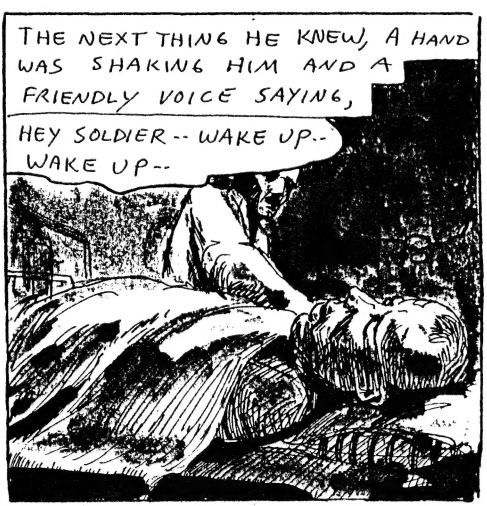
IN MOMENTS SLOAN WAS UPON THE FALLEN FIGURE. HAVING USED HIS LAST BULLET, HE GROPED FOR THE NAZI'S THROAT BENEATH THE BIZARRE MASK.
MY BARE HANDS WILL HAVE TO DO FOR YOU!

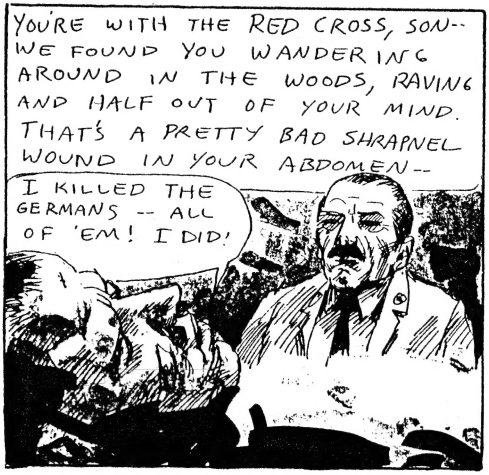

THE FURY AND HATE CONSUMED HIM. IT SEEMED TO GIVE HIM GREAT STRENGTH -- TO SLOAN, IT SEEMED AS IF HE WERE TWICE AS BIG AS THE NAZI -- AND TWICE AS STRONG!
DIE! DIE! DIE!
-- PERHAPS IT WAS HIS DILIRIUM THAT GAVE HIM HIS STRENGTH.

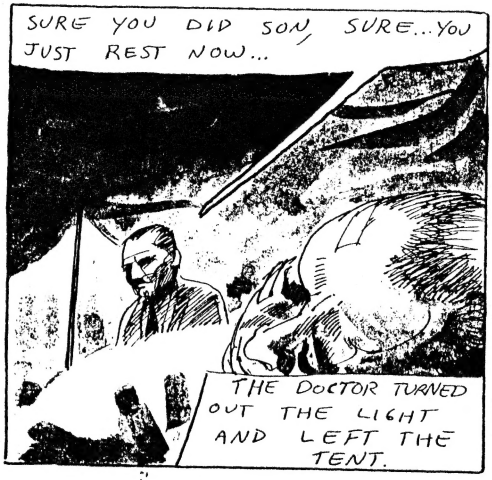
FINALLY, IT WAS ALL OVER...
I DID IT, LORD... I DID IT... WOUNDED AS I AM, I KILLED HIM. :GASP:!
HE SEEMED SO WEAK-- SO SMALL--

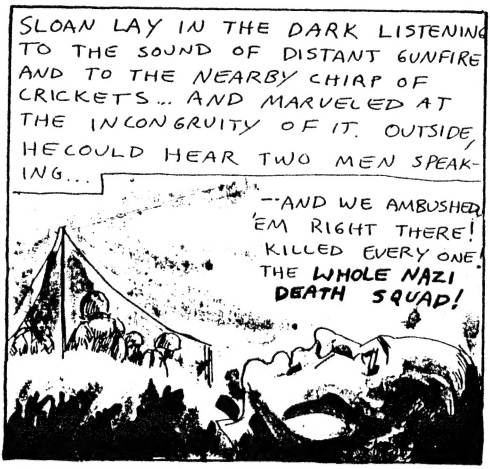
THEN SLOAN PASSED OUT.

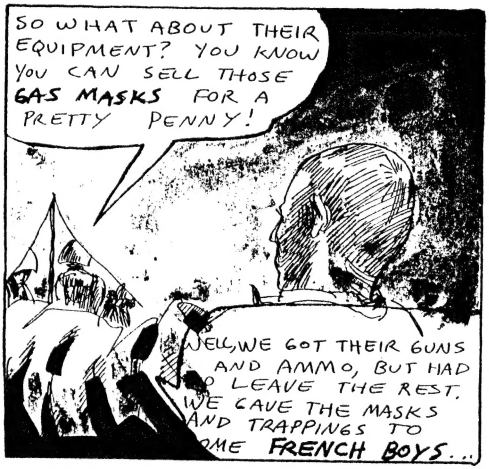
HE DREAMED HE WAS PLAYING SOLDIER AROUND A DECREPIT CHURCH, FIGHTING WITH TOYS...


THE NEXT THING HE KNEW, A HAND WAS SHAKING HIM AND A FRIENDLY VOICE SAYING,
HEY SOLDIER -- WAKE UP-- WAKE UP--


YOU'RE WITH THE RED CROSS, SON-- WE FOUND YOU WANDERING AROUND IN THE WOODS, RAVING AND HALF OUT OF YOUR MIND. THAT'S A PRETTY BAD SHRAPNEL WOUND IN YOUR ABDOMEN--
I KILLED THE GERMANS -- ALL OF 'EM! I DID!


SURE YOU DID SON, SURE.. YOU JUST REST NOW...
THE DOCTOR TURNED OUT THE LIGHT AND LEFT THE TENT.


SLOAN LAY IN THE DARK LISTENING TO THE SOUND OF DISTANT GUNFIRE AND TO THE NEARBY CHIRP OF CRICKETS.. AND MARVELED AT THE INCONGRUITY OF IT. OUTSIDE, HE COULD HEAR TWO MEN SPEAKING...
--AND WE AMBUSHED 'EM RIGHT THERE! KILLED EVERY ONE! THE WHOLE NAZI DEATH SQUAD!


SO WHAT ABOUT THEIR EQUIPMENT? YOU KNOW YOU CAN SELL THOSE GAS MASKS FOR A PRETTY PENNY!
WELL, WE GOT THEIR GUNS AND AMMO, BUT HAD TO LEAVE THE REST. WE GAVE THE MASKS AND TRAPPINGS TO SOME FRENCH BOYS...

BOYS? WHAT IN THE WORLD WOULD THEY WANT TO DO WITH DEATH SQUAD EQUIPMENT?
WHAT WOULD ANY BOY DO? PUT IT ON AND PLAY SOLDIER?

FROM INSIDE THE TENT, A SOUND, AS IF A MAN WERE CRYING SOFTLY, COULD BE HEARD.
OH GOD! GOD! CHOKE
THEN RAIN BEGAN TO FALL FROM THE DISMAL GREY SKY.
THE END

HI! I'M M. SHAW, CRAZED FREE LANCE CARTOONIST--!! YOU MAY HAVE SEEN SOME OF MY WORK IN THE AUSTIN CHRONICLE OR THE AMERICAN STATESMAN--
I DO FLYERS, NEWSPAPER ADS, CARTOONS AND EVEN ENTIRE COMIC BOOKS -- ALL CAMERA READY -- AND ALL BY MYSELF!! —NO OVERHEAD!!
I LIVE TO DRAW!! IT'S MY DREAM!! —AND NOW YOU CAN TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS PSYCHOTIC ABNORMALITY--
CAMERA READY ARTWORK FROM $25.00 TO $100.00 DEPENDING ON COMPLEXITY-- LOWEST PRICES IMAGINABLE!!
—IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE YOU CAN GET AN ORIGINAL AD FOR $100.00 OR LESS-- GIVE ME A CALL!!
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UNCLE MARK IN HOLLY-WOOD!
AFTER LEANGTHY NEGOTIATIONS WITH RAMBLIN' PRODUCTIONS, UNCLE MARK IS ESCORTED TO THE OFFICE OF THE LEGENDARY HEAD HONCHO, HIMSELF!
S. SPEELREEL PRESIDENT
WOW! I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!
MR. SPEELREEL WILL SEE YOU MOMENTARILY...
I'M ABOUT TO CLINCH THE DEAL! IS THIS REALLY HAP-PENING?!
SOON...
WELL, MARK, I THINK WE'VE COVERED EVERY-THING...
CONTRACT
HERE — LOOK THIS CONTRACT OVER... I THINK YOU'LL FIND IT O.K.!
WE'RE GOING TO PRODUCE "THE HOLLOW EARTH" AS A 50 MILLION DOLLAR ANIMATED FEATURE, USING THE COMBINED FACILITIES OF THE RICHARD WILLIAMS STUDIOS AND ILM FOR THE ANIMATION -- WITH YOU AS THE WRITER/DIRECTOR!
YOU'LL HAVE COMPLETE CONTROL OF ALL ASPECTS OF THE PRODUCTION! HOW DOES THAT SOUND?
GREAT!
I MUST BE DREAMING!
AH, YES! THIS WILL BE A FANTASTIC MOVIE! --AND TO THINK IT ALL STARTED WITH THESE CRUDE LITTLE XEROX COMICS...
—WHAT'S THIS?! I NEVER NOTICED THIS BEFORE --! ON THE BACK OF WALTER KITTY #5 ("HOLLOW EARTH" PART TWO) -- AN UNFAV-ORABLE COMMENT REGARDING ONE OF MY PREVIOUS ANIMATED CLASSICS!!!
OOPS!
AND DON'T COME BACK!!
UNUSUAL PICTURE
SOB! CHOKE! —AND I WAS SO CLOSE!!
ZZZ- ZUP! GOSH! WHAT A STRANGE DREAM!
— WHERE DID I EVER DREAM UP A CHARACTER LIKE "UNCLE MARK"?!
—TOO MUCH PIZZA BEFORE BEDTIME, I GUESS...
— TOO WEIRD!

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THE END!